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ABSTRACT

The New Jersey Department of Education asked Research for Better Schools, Inc., to design and conduct a data-collection process that would generate information about the programs and practices in the school districts participating in the state's Operation School Renewal (OSR) in 1986-87. The primary purpose was to provide descriptive program data for the interim evaluation of the Urban Initiative (Year 3). Data were gathered from sites through interviews with 147 teachers, students, administrators, and counselors in 3 districts. Descriptions that were generated are discussed for five areas that reflect the OSR issues of attendance, achievement, principal effectiveness, disruptive behavior, and youth unemployment. Narratives give the program description, background information, descriptions of needed resources, project-implementation factors, and evidence of program impact. Three figures illustrate program aspects. An appendix contains the interview format. (SLD)

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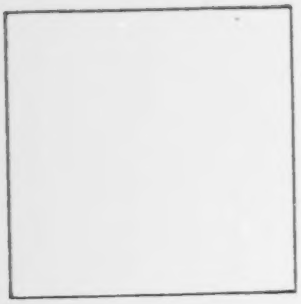

Facing the Challenge:
Selected Programs and Practices of the Urban Initiative's Operation School Renewal (1986-87)

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A Component of the
Urban Initiative Interim Evaluation

Developed for
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF SPECIAL PRODUCTS

by
RESEARCH FOR BETTER SCHOOLS, INC.
444 NORTH THIRD STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

February 1988

Research for Bettter Schools, Inc. (RBS) has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education to be the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory, serving Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Its mission is to collaborate with state, intermediate, and local educational agencies to improve district, school, and classroom practice. To this end, RBS provides a wide range of services that include research, evaluation, information synthesis, planning, materials development, staff development, and technical assistance. Current RBS activities address such topics as: the design of effective remediation programs; programs for students at risk; teacher induction, supervision, and evaluation; evaluation of state programs to improve effectiveness of urban schools; and the impact of state testing programs and graduation requirements.

The work upon which this publication is based was funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the postion or policy of OERI and no official endorsement by OERI should be inferred.

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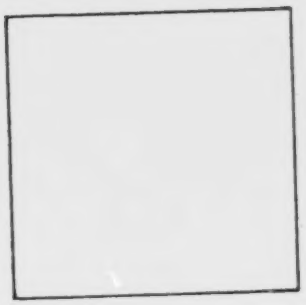

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Jersey Department of Education asked Research for Better Schools (RBS) to design and conduct a data collection process that would result in the development of descriptive information about programs and practices in the Operation School Renewal (OSR) districts for 1986-87. The primary purpose for describing select OSR programs and practices was to provide descriptive programmatic data for the Interim Evaluation of the Urban Initiative (Year 3). This information, it is hoped, will help the state and its urban districts with the planning and implementation of future initiatives aimed at improving school effectiveness.

Data were gathered by a team of RBS staff and NJDE consultants in June, 1987 in select sites identified as demonstrating promising programs and practices. They conducted interviews with a total of 147 teachers, students, administrators, and counselors in the three districts. Team members used an interview schedule that reflected the interests of NJDE and the OSR districts. They also visited teacher planning meetings, group discussions, as well as observed students engaged in program activities. RBS managed the data analysis and the development of the program descriptions.

The descriptions developed from this process are grouped in five parts that reflect the OSR objectives (attendance, achievement, principal effectiveness, disruptive behavior, and youth unemployment). They include narratives that provide program description, background information, a description of needed resources, a description of key program implementation factors, and evidence of program effectiveness/impact. Each part begins with an overview of the programs under that objective. The overview describes an array of features that illustrate program emphasis and common elements.

While the attendance programs incorporate an array of strategies to achieve the objective, many of them also share common emphasis. These include the provision of personal contact between students and a caring adult, the involvement of parents, the need for personnel to have special counseling skills, and the maintenance of accurate records.

The achievement programs are diverse, and presented according to whether they represent a specialized program, or a total school effort to improve student performance. The programs illustrate some key elements, such as: altering traditional patterns of school organization to enable staff to respond more flexibly to student needs, involving staff in professional decisions, planning instruction based on diagnostic evidence of student needs, and providing for collaborative planning.

The principal effectiveness programs share important features, such as: the application of programs from the effective schools research on principal leadership, and the comprehensive involvement of administrators.

The disruptive youth programs share certain features which include: counseling services, academic help, parent support and involvement, the establishment of personal relationships, the provision of alternative environments, and the establishment of clear expectations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this product is in large part due to the cooperation and support provided by the three Operation School Renewal districts' administrative and teaching staff. They generously offered their time and enthusiasm in sharing how they are facing the challenge of improving education for their students.

Valuable assistance was also contributed by the NJDE's Office of Urban Initiative/Operation School Renewal. The conscientious work of the site team members and their thorough approach to learning about the select OSR programs and practices has resulted in this product. The numerous drafts were patiently typed and retyped by Ms. Lisa Jefferson.

The youth unemployment program illustrates a state-designed model of assistance that includes the provision of career awareness, job development and placement.

Following is a list of the selected programs described in Facing the Challenge: Selected Programs and Practices of the Urban Initiative's Operation School Renewal.

ATTENDANCE

Computerized Attendance System (East Orange School District)
Elementary Guidance Counselor (Neptune Township School District)
Home/School Community Workers (Trenton School District)
Teacher/Advocate Program (Clifford J. Scott High School, East Orange School District)
Tutorial Homework Hotline (East Orange School District)

ACHIEVEMENT

(Individual Programs)

Homework for the Family (Neptune Township School District)
Individualized Writing Program (Neptune High School, Neptune Township School District)
Inservice Pullout Model (Neptune Township School District)

(Total School Programs)

Junior High School #1 (Trenton School District)
Grant Elementary School (Trenton School District)
Nassau Elementary School (East Orange School District)
Franklin Elementary School (East Orange School)
Sojourner Truth Middle School (East Orange School District)

PRINCIPAL EFFECTIVENESS

Assessor/Assessee Program (East Orange School District)
District-Wide Principal Inservice Program (Neptune Township School District)
Principal Recognition Activity (East Orange School District)

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Assertive Discipline Program (Neptune Township School District)
Behavior Improvement Program (East Orange School District)
Family Consultation Program (East Orange School District)
In-school Adjustment Center (Grant and Gregory Elementary Schools, Trenton School District)
Project Balloon (Franklin Elementary School, East Orange School District)
Saturday Neptune Alternative Program (Neptune High School, Neptune Township School District)

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Career Resource and Assessment Centers (East Orange, Neptune, and Trenton School Districts)

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to provide descriptive information about how the OSR districts and schools have used project resources to design and implement practices to:

- increase student attendance
- improve student performance
- increase principal effectiveness
- decrease disruptive student behavior
- decrease youth unemployment.

This information, it is hoped, will help the state and its urban districts with the planning and implementation of future initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness of education provided in those districts.

NJDE asked Research for Better Schools (RBS) to design and conduct a data collection process that would enable such descriptive information to be prepared. RBS agreed to undertake this task as one of its State Leadership Assistance activities, supported by its contract as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory. The process that was followed included these steps:

1. State and district staff involved with OSR identified programs and practices that reflected a representative sample of elementary and secondary programs, as well as school- and district-level interventions believed to be making a positive contribution to one of five OSR outcome measures.

2. RBS designed an interview schedule that reflected the interests of both NJDE and the OSR districts, and included a series of open-ended questions that served as a discussion guide for interviewers.

3. RBS trained five site visitors (NJDE consultants and RBS staff) to conduct the interviews and prepare draft descriptions.

4. In June 1977, two-member teams visited each district for approximately three days. The teams spoke with a total of 147 people, including 67 teachers, 29 students, 19 principals and vice principals, 15 school- and district-level counselors, and 14 content area supervisors. Individual interviews lasted approximately 30-90 minutes. Visits also included informal conversations with people involved in the various programs. In addition, the team attended teacher planning meetings and group discussions, and observed students engaged in a variety of program activities.

5. RBS prepared final program/practices descriptions, based on draft descriptions written by team members.

The descriptions that resulted from this component of the OSR Interim Evaluation are presented on the following pages. They are grouped in five parts that reflect the OSR objectives: Attendance, Achievement, Principal Effectiveness, Disruptive Youth, and Youth Unemployment. Each part begins with an overview that summarizes the programs/practices and describes areas of emphasis. Each of the subsequent narratives includes:

- program objective
- program description
- history/background of the program's development
- description of necessary resources
- description of factors that may have contributed to or created challenges to program implementation
- evidence of program effectiveness.

The programs/practices described here are only a small sample of the many and varied school improvement efforts taking place in the OSR districts. In addition, none of these programs/practices exist in isolation; their development is influenced by district- and school-level needs and priorities.

ATTENDANCE

OSR OBJECTIVE: To improve pupil attendance in each project school to the statewide average of 92 percent.

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Overview of Programs/Practices

The five projects described in this section illustrate how local school districts are attempting to achieve the OSR attendance objective.

Computerized Attendance System (East Orange School District)

A program to operationalize a computerized attendance system that maintains accurate records and provides information that enables district staff to take action to correct chronic absenteeism.

Elementary Guidance Counselor (Neptune Township School District)

A program to achieve and maintain an attendance rate of at least 93 percent in all elementary schools by employing an elementary guidance counselor to support and assist chronically absent and/or disruptive children and their parents and teachers.

Home/School Community Workers (Trenton School District)

A program to eliminate chronic absenteeism and reduce the gap between the school and the student's home and community through the employment of home/school community workers.

Teacher/Advocate Program (Clifford J. Scott High School, East Orange School District)

A program to provide each high school student with personal support in solving academic or personal problems affecting attendance and school performance through a system of teacher/advocates.

Tutorial Homework Hotline (East Orange School District)

A program to improve attendance by supporting academic achievement and promoting the self-esteem of students in grades three through eight through a tutorial homework hotline.

While these five programs incorporate an array of strategies to achieve the attendance objective, they also share common emphases (see Figure 1).

- Personal Contact. Four of the five projects focus on establishing personal contact between students and a caring adult. Trenton's Home/School Community Workers and Neptune's Elementary Guidance programs link those in a counseling role with students who are chronically absent or have other special needs. The Teacher/Advocate program illustrates how a high school faculty can establish important relationships with an entire student body by having each teacher assume a counseling role with a small group of students. The Tutorial Homework Hotline provides personal contact in a unique way--over the telephone.

- Parent Involvement. Four of the five projects seek to capture the attention and support of parents in solving attendance problems. Trenton's home/school community workers and Neptune's elementary guidance counselor spend a major portion of their time establishing a supportive relationship between the school and parent. East Orange's hotline tutors may devote up to 40 percent of their calls in a given month to contacting parents of children with excessive absences. The computerized attendance system provides the data to alert district personnel as soon as a pattern of absence begins to emerge.

- Special Counseling Skills. Three of the projects, representing all three school districts, feature school personnel who have the special counseling skills necessary to meet the individual needs of students with attendance problems.

- Systematic Records. The maintenance of accurate attendance records is the primary objective of East Orange's computerized attendance system; however all the projects are dependent on systematic record keeping to alert school personnel to students in need of special attention.

The last two columns on Figure 1 describe the grade level the program targets, and whether or not the program is a school or district level approach.

Figure 1
Components of Attendance Programs

	Personal Contact	Parent Involvement	Special Counseling Skills	Systematic Records	Current Target Audience (Grades)	School-level or District-level Approach
Computerized Attendance System		•		+	K-12	District-level
Elementary Guidance Counselor	+	+	+	•	K-6	District-level
Home/School Community Workers	+	+	+	•	K-12	School-level (with district supervision)
Teacher/ Advocate Program	+		•	•	9-12	School-level
Tutorial Homework Hotline	•	•		•	3-8	District-level

• = A component of the program
+ = A major component of the program

Computerized Attendance System

(East Orange School District)

Objective

East Orange School District seeks to achieve the OSR attendance objective by operationalizing a computerized attendance system that maintains accurate records and provides information that enables district staff to take action to correct chronic absenteeism.

Description

East Orange School District has established a computerized system under a contracted services agreement with the Essex County Educational Services Commission. At the high school, attendance is recorded on mark-sense forms which are scanned with a Scantron and sent via terminal to the central data center. At the middle and elementary schools, attendance data are recorded by hand and sent to the center to be entered at a terminal.

The system generates daily attendance lists for each of the district's schools. These lists allow the district to identify and follow up with those students who are chronically absent or in danger of becoming so. Specifically, during 1986-87 the district sent out letters every Friday to all students who had accumulated a total of four, nine, fourteen, or eighteen absences during the school year. Students with four absences were visited or called by a home/school community worker. Through December, the nine-day letter served as a legal notice of absences.

The district is continuing to try different approaches with the letters to absentees. In 1987-88, there will be no letter after four absences, and the nine day letter will be used through March '88. In addition, computer driven telephone machines will call the homes of all students who are absent. In the future, attendance will be taken each period and phone calls will be made for class cuts.

History/Background

The OSR planning process made the improvement of the district's attendance system a priority and computerization became a possibility. The system went into effect in 1985-1986.

Resources

OSR funding provided the seed money necessary to purchase initial hardware and software for the centralized attendance system. The system now functions entirely with district-budgeted funds. No additional support is needed, unless the district expands the automated record keeping to the middle and elementary schools.

Implementation

The computerized attendance system is still under development. Current equipment is sufficient only to provide high school principals with immediate access to student records on attendance, test scores, demographics, grades, and course schedule. Automatic letter writing is in place, and computerized phone calling is planned for the near future.

Effectiveness

East Orange has developed an accurate attendance record keeping system which has been substantiated by state audit. Since 1985-86, the first year of the computerized system, the district has not lost state aid due to audit exceptions of attendance records.

District personnel feel the computerized attendance system is also making a valuable contribution to reducing absenteeism within the district.

Elementary Guidance Counselor

(Neptune Township School District)

Objective

Neptune Township School District seeks to achieve and maintain an attendance rate of at least 93 percent in each of its schools by employing an elementary guidance counselor to support and assist chronically absent children, and their parents and teachers. The program also seeks to help teachers and principals deal with students who display serious behavior problems in school.

Description

Neptune's elementary guidance counselor works with children in all five of the district's elementary schools. Teachers and administrators alert her to children in need by completing a "counseling referral data sheet," a half-page form which provides space for the student's name and a brief description of the problem or concern. Students can request a visit with the counselor through their teachers, who fill out a "student request form."

The children the counselor works with represent a wide range of difficulties:

- abuse and neglect at home
- involvement with drugs and/or alcohol
- suicidal tendencies
- drug and alcohol abuse at home
- disruptive behavior in class.

The counselor has designed an open-ended questionnaire to help her get to know each student and to serve as a diagnostic tool. It includes statements such as: "Something I'd like to tell my teacher is..." "the best thing that could happen to me is..." "I wish my parents knew...". She works with the children and their teachers to develop "behavior contracts" that spell out the consequences, both positive and negative, of specific behaviors. She also does individual counseling with children in crisis. For example, in 1986-87 she worked with eight children, in kindergarten through fifth grade, who talked to her about suicide.

The counselor works collaboratively with a variety of people who care about the child's welfare, including parents, school and district staff, and community agencies.

Her work with parents varies with the individual situation. She sometimes serves as an intermediary in communications between parents and teachers, and often attends parent-teacher conferences. She keeps parents informed of district-sponsored activities which might be helpful to them (e.g., a workshop on assertive discipline). In addition, she may refer them to other agencies for counseling and/or help with problems such as drug and alcohol abuse.

She meets regularly with the district's five elementary principals to update them on the progress and status of individual children in their buildings. She also consults regularly with the district's Child Study Team and with the school psychologist. In addition, she often works directly with community agencies (e.g., the Department for Youth and Family Services) in cases of child abuse and neglect.

She believes that part of her responsibility is to inform the community about the serious problems children face today.

She maintains a written record of all her work: individual logs on each of the children documenting what she has done and her perception of the results; and a log that tracks children with excessive absentee rates.

History/Background

Nearly a decade ago, the district had an elementary guidance counselor who worked with teachers and students, but the district did not have the funds to maintain the position. With the advent of the OSR planning process and the possibility of funding, the district saw a way to reestablish the position of guidance counselor to work on the OSR attendance objective. District supervisors worked with principals, teachers, and guidance personnel from each school to formulate a job description, propose activities and time lines, and select resources.

Resources

The primary costs associated with this program are for personnel (i.e., salary and benefits for the counselor and secretarial support). OSR funds have provided a significant portion of the counselor's salary. In the future, the district will seek to fund the position under its operating budget and a new early intervention program, FRESHSTART.

Implementation

Neptune's elementary guidance program requires a counselor who:

- has the professional training and experience necessary to provide the services demanded by the job
- generates confidence among and is willing to work with school staff on the problems of individual students

- is flexible, willing to work in a variety of settings and reach out to a range of agencies and resources.

Effectiveness

Both teachers and principals are enthusiastic about the services provided by the elementary guidance counselor. As one teacher put it, "We need a counselor in each building!" They appreciate the support she gives and the opportunity for students to have a one-on-one experience with an adult who cares about vitally important issues. They believe that the program has helped to reduce disruptive behavior and to get chronically absent children to school.

Hard data on effects are not yet available, but the counselor is already serving a large number of children and their families. In fact, the demand may exceed the ability of one individual to respond. In 1986-87, the counselor's weekly caseload was sometimes as high as 140-150 students. Such high demand may diminish the ability of the counselor to meet individual needs.

Home/School Community Workers

(Trenton School District)

Objective

Trenton School District seeks to eliminate chronic absenteeism and reduce the gap between the school and the students' home and community through the employment of home/school community workers.

Description

Trenton School District has employed eight home/school community workers, two assigned to the high school and six to the junior highs and their feeder elementary schools. Their job is to do everything possible to help chronic absentees get to and stay in school, with an emphasis on establishing rapport with students and their families. Their work contrasts with that of the attendance officer, who is responsible for the enforcement of state law and district policy and has jurisdiction in legal actions (e.g., insuring that persistently truant and/or disruptive students appear at the Family Crisis Intervention Unit).

The job of the home/school community workers requires flexibility, adaptability, and creativity, and each worker approaches it somewhat differently. They carry on their work in school hallways, counselors' offices, the teachers' lounge, students' homes, and community agencies. They hold informal rap sessions with students in the cafeteria, drive the school van on excursions, and become an active member of the community. One plays the saxophone in a student group.

As one worker notes, "There is no such thing as a typical day. Every day has different challenges and surprises." She serves to illustrate one approach to the job.

She begins her day at the junior high where she examines "attendance improvement forms" which homeroom teachers use to report the name, address, and phone number of each student absent three or more days in a two-week period. This form has proved so helpful in identifying students with potential problems that the workers plan to ask teachers to fill it out at more frequent intervals in the future. She also checks her mail for notes from the staff, and talks with the vice principal or principal about students who need attention.

She then develops her contact sheet, referring some students to the attendance officer and deciding between phone calls and home visits for the others. Since parents sometimes forget to call the school about illness or transfers, phone calls are an important first step and often take care of the problem.

Home visits take place during the day and may extend into the evening when parents are more certain to be home. Some days she makes three to four visits; others, 10 to 15. Home visits may involve picking up and

delivering homework to a suspended student, assisting a pregnant student to make contact with community agencies, or discovering that a student is absent because he is self-conscious about the condition of his clothes or the bruises he received in a beating. Whatever the situation, she records her observations, recommendations, and foreseeable problems on a "home contact form" which must be signed by a parent or guardian.

She works hard to encourage and help students come back to and stay in school. She notes, "The kids know there is someone out there. And the parents know too. They check in with me regularly, once they get to know me."

History/Background

The idea of home/school community workers is not new in the Trenton School District. From the late '60s until recently, the district had similar workers, funded under Title I, who dealt with both attendance and behavior problems. Funds available from the OSR portion of the Urban Initiative allowed the district to rehire this special kind of worker.

Resources

The primary costs associated with this program are for personnel (salaries and benefits). In addition, the district extended the workers' insurance to cover the transport of students in school vehicles and their own cars.

Implementation

School staff identified five factors which they associate with the success of the home/school community workers.

- The caliber of those who perform the job. Attributes include:

  -- the ability to accommodate to a variety of situations

  -- the ability to make sound decisions

  -- the ability to treat each student and parent as an individual

  -- familiarity with and known to the community

  -- knowledge of local agencies and how to access their services.

- Workers' freedom and flexibility to operate in ways that best meet the needs of the school and its students. As a vice-principal commented, "The worst thing to do would be to totally structure this person's time and tasks."

- The assignment of a minimum number of schools to any one home/school community worker.

- Clear demarcation between the roles of attendance officer and home/school community workers and a clear understanding of how they should work together.

- Regular opportunities for home/school community workers to meet as a group to share strategies and challenges.

Effectiveness

The two junior high home/school community workers who were interviewed for this program had both been identified as having a positive impact in their schools. Therefore, this section on effectiveness specifically uses junior high data. Junior high school attendance data provide an indication of early program success. In 1985-86, the average daily attendance (ADA) rate of the six junior highs was 86.5 percent. By April of the first year the district employed the home/school community workers.

- the ADA for all junior highs was 88.57 percent, an increase of 2.07 percent

- four of the six junior highs had gains averaging 3.2 percent; one had a gain of 4.48 percent

- two of the six junior highs had achieved the goal of 90 percent.

Junior high staff note other indicators of success. Administrators say they have learned a great deal through the home/school community workers, and now count on them as pipelines to information otherwise inaccessible. Some staff suggest that the personal contact of the workers accomplishes far more with absent students than the automatic computer phone dialer. One worker notes, "I cannot walk down the hall now without a teacher stopping me and telling me about how a student is doing or alerting me to a potential problem." In addition, parents are now calling and asking for assistance.

Elementary attendance for 1985-86 shows a slight improvement over earlier years. Similar trends are not observable for the high school.

Teacher/Advocate Program

(East Orange School District)

Objective

Clifford J. Scott High School seeks to provide each student with personal support in solving academic or personal problems affecting attendance and school performance through a program of teacher/advocates.

Description

The program pairs groups of 8-12 students from grades nine through twelve with a teacher/advocate. They meet together on a scheduled basis during a special period at the end of the school day. In addition, both advocates and students can request private, one-on-one meetings at any time. The advocates provide students with an adult they can go to for help with school and personal problems. Advocates are also responsible for monitoring student warning notices and report cards, class and school attendance, and individual academic and social problems.

Students receive the name of their advocate on their class roster at the beginning of the school year, and attend an orientation session to learn about the program. During the first year, advocates met with their groups about four times. In the second year, advocates will hold more frequent sessions, and guidance counselors will provide group sessions as well.

History/Background

OSR became the catalyst for the Teacher/Advocate Program. The idea originated at Clifford J. Scott High School during initial OSR planning and was discussed by administrators, staff, department heads, and students. Detailed planning occurred during the 1985-86 school year, and the program was put into full operation the following September.

Resources

The Teacher/Advocate Program required no special resources from OSR to launch or operate. Advocates and their groups meet during a scheduled period of the school day, so there are no costs beyond those necessary to operate the school. Advocates receive some training, and additional training on counseling techniques may be provided.

Implemention

The program has been implemented smoothly and according to plan. The faculty was initially somewhat fearful of taking on a new role, but once

that fear was overcome, almost all were in favor of the program. As one said, it is one of the "few things nobody tried to sabotage." Implementation has been enhanced by the encouragement and cooperation of local community agencies.

The first years' experience suggests that in the larger groups (up to 15 students), students tend to be more "closed mouthed" during group counseling sessions and more distant. Smaller groups work out better. Other suggestions include:

- more frequent meetings between advocates and their groups
- more time in each session to fully explore the topics and give everyone a chance to talk
- more open-ended discussion in addition to special topics designated for each session
- more external speakers and consultants
- additional inservice for teachers on counseling techniques.

Effectiveness

Overwhelmingly, those associated with the Teacher/Advocate Program feel that it has been effective. According to those interviewed, the program has:

- provided students with an additional adult to talk to
- increased students' sense of security
- improved interpersonal relationships between students and teachers
- increased teacher contact with students not in their classes
- increased faculty sense of shared responsibility for students
- improved communication between the staff and the counselors
- improved communication between the counselors and parents
- improved the school's ability to remediate academic problems.

In an informal evaluation conducted by the principal, teachers report that students talk a lot about discussing problems with their advocates and how much they look forward to seeing them. The staff believe that the program may be responsible for keeping students in school who might otherwise have considered leaving. They say people seem to feel closer, more like a family. In addition, students seem to have more respect for staff and for school and personal property, and disruptive activity has declined.

Tutorial Homework Hotline

(East Orange School District)

Objective

East Orange School District seeks to improve attendance by supporting academic achievement and promoting the self-esteem of students in grades three through eight through its Tutorial Homework Hotline.

Description

East Orange School District's homework hotline is located in the district's Community Outreach Center, which was established to provide a link to the community through a variety of services to students and parents. The hotline operates from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. It is staffed by seven "homework tutors," all certified teachers. Two of the tutors are bilingual, one in Spanish and the other in Haitian. Each tutor works a two-hour shift.

Hotline tutors handle up to 500 calls a month. The calls can be divided into three groups:

- incoming tutorial calls. Most incoming calls are from the district students in grades three through eight who have questions about homework. However, the hotline also gets calls from high school and parochial school students, and from "latchkey" children who just want to make contact with an adult.

- outreach calls. The attendance office supplies hotline tutors with the names and phone numbers of absent students. The tutors call these students with their homework assignments and offer to help if they have any questions.

- "absenteeism" calls. With information supplied by the attendance office, tutors call the parents of children who have excessive absenteeism.

In addition, tutors send notes to teachers when a student's homework question needs follow-up or clarification.

History/Background

East Orange School District established the Community Outreach Center as part of OSR. Center planners were committed to addressing the problem of student attendance. The hotline grew out of the belief that students who were adequately prepared for school, with completed homework assignments, would feel better about themselves and thus would be more likely to attend school.

Tutorial Homework Hotline

(East Orange School District)

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The Tutorial Homework Hotline was modeled after the New York City Dial-a-Teacher program sponsored by the American Federation of Teachers. It became operational in March 1986 with four teacher tutors.

Resources

The hotline occupies space in the district's Community Outreach Center. It has three phone lines and one master line and employs seven tutors and a part-time director. Excluding space and facilities, the cost of the hotline is approximately $26,000 per year to cover personnel, phone service, and copies of curriculum texts and other materials.

Implementation

A number of groups have supported the implementation of the homework hotline. Teachers promote it among their students. The student council has put its stamp of approval on the program. The library provides reference information to hotline tutors on when and how to use the library. In the community, a Haitian bilingual tutoring program makes referrals. City Hall has promoted it.

However, tutors believe that implementation might have been facilitated by initially serving children in the lower grades and gradually moving up to the middle school level.

Barriers to implementation include lack of funding and a cutback in staffing. The future of the program is uncertain when OSR funds are no longer available.

Effectiveness

During the school year 1986-87, hotline tutors maintained a monthly record of all calls. With adjustments to account for months when school was only partially in session, the mean monthly totals for September through May are as follows:

	Mean
Incoming calls	120
Outreach calls	165
Absenteeism	88
TOTAL CALLS	386

Tutors believe one of the reasons for the hotline's popularity is its anonymity. It is easier for students to admit they need help if they do not risk embarrassment in front of an entire class.

ACHIEVEMENT

OSR OBJECTIVE: To raise pupil performance in mathematics, reading, and writing to state standards.

Overview of Program/Practices

This section provides descriptions of activities undertaken by local school districts to improve the academic achievement of their students. The first three describe individual programs directed at a single area of the curriculum or target group. The remaining five represent total school efforts designed to meet the needs of all students.

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS

Homework for the Family (Neptune Township School District)

A program to involve parents with their elementary school children in problem-solving and creative activities in math, reading, and writing in a comfortable, non-threatening environment.

Individualized Writing Program (Neptune Senior High School, Neptune Township School District)

A program to improve the writing skills of high school students through intensive tutorial assistance offered on a scheduled basis throughout the school day.

Inservice Pullout Model (Neptune Township School District)

A program to provide quality inservice opportunities during the school day for teachers and other staff to address important curriculum issues in reading and math, and to learn new instructional strategies.

TOTAL SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Junior High School #1 (Trenton School District)

A total school effort to improve the academic performance, behavior, and attendance of junior high students through systematic, objectives-based instruction in a safe, personal environment.

Grant Elementary School (Trenton School District)

A total school effort to improve the academic performance of students through the involvement of staff in the professional decisions necessary to achieve that goal and the accountability of staff for their professional performance.

Nassau Elementary School (East Orange School District)

A total school effort to improve the academic achievement of students, with emphasis on the involvement of the total staff in establishing instructional priorities based on student needs and in determining the sequence of skills to be taught across the grade levels.

Franklin Elementary (East Orange School District)

A total school effort to improve the academic performance of students, with emphasis on a continuous cycle of planning and instruction across the content areas based on diagnosis of student needs.

Sojourner Truth Middle School (East Orange School District)

A total school effort to improve the academic achievement of students, with emphasis on the maintenance of an instructional management system to monitor both instruction and student learning in reading, writing, and mathematics.

While there are differences in specifics across the programs, they have several important elements in common:

- Flexibility. The programs reflect a willingness to alter traditional patterns of organization to enable staff to respond more flexibly to student needs. For example, Trenton's Junior High #1 has reorganized both space and schedule to maximize the ability of staff to respond to student needs. Grant Elementary School's reorganization of its remedial education program provides both resource room and grade level teachers with increased opportunities to provide appropriate and individualized instruction to their students. Neptune High School assigns English teachers to the Individualized Writing Program as one of their instructional periods, allowing students to be scheduled throughout the day for individual tutorial help. Neptune's Inservice Pullout Model provides district teachers with the opportunity for continuing education during their working day while ensuring minimal disruption to their schools.

- Staff Involvement in Professional Decisions. In all the case study schools, teachers play an active role in making the professional decisions necessary to improve student performance. They are continuously involved in analyzing student needs, establishing instructional priorities, planning appropriate interventions, and assessing the results. Inherent in these schools is the accountability of the staff for professional performance.

- Evaluation Informs Instruction. In all of the case study schools, instruction is based on diagnostic evidence of student needs. Student progress is assessed on a routine and systematic basis, and instructional plans are adjusted accordingly.

- Collaborative Planning. The case study schools provide regular opportunities for collaborative planning by staff, whether it be across grade levels, within a grade level, within a content area, across content areas, or for specific ability groups.

- Inservice Training. All of the programs involve school staff in regular inservice opportunities that address key issues related to program objectives. In addition, staff identify their own training needs through their Professional Improvement Plans (PIP).

- Strong Leadership. All of the programs reflect strong leadership at both the building and district level to support performance goals.

Figure 2

Elements of Achievement Programs

Programs	Flexibility	Staff Involvement in Professional Decisions	Evaluation Informs Instruction	Collaborative Planning	Inservice Training	Strong Leadership
Homework for the Family					•	•
Individualized Writing Program	+				•	•
Inservice Pullout Model	•				+	•
J.H.S. #1	•	+	+	+	•	+
Grant Elementary	•	+	+	+	•	+
Nassau Elementary		+	+	+	•	+
Franklin Elementary		+	+	+	•	+
Soujourner Truth M.S.		+	+	+	•	+

• = An component of the program
+ = A major component of the program

Homework for the Family

(Neptune Township School District)

Objective

Neptune Township School District seeks to encourage parents to become more involved in the education of their children and to develop stronger, more positive relationships between the schools and parents and the community.

Description

Neptune Township School District has designed a series of four-week courses to provide a comfortable, non-threatening setting where elementary students and their parents can enjoy, explore, and create in the basic skills subjects. The Homework for the Family courses emphasize problem solving strategies, introduce activities that can be done at home, and offer a heavy dose of fun. They are offered through the Neptune Community School, an adult evening school well established in the community.

The first course, "Problem Solving Homework for the Family," was offered as a trial run in the fall of 1986. Designed for children in grades 4-6 and their families, it focused on a hands-on exploration of problem solving strategies in mathematics.

A second math course, "Problem Solving in Mathematics," was offered in the spring of 1987, again for students in grades 4-6 and their families. Through activities such as making graphs with M&Ms and constructing geodesic domes out of gum drops and toothpicks, parents and children developed skills to solve problems in geometry and measurement, probability and statistics, estimation, and use of a calculator.

Two courses in language arts were also offered in the spring. "Reading for Understanding," designed for students in grades 1-3 and their families, offered a potpourri of reading games and other activities that could also be used at home to increase reading comprehension. The course had one rule: "Fifteen minutes of reading together, every night," reinforced by a field trip to the public library. Participants signed up for library cards and met the new children's librarian who could help them discover the library's secrets. "Written Expression" introduced students in grades 4-6 and their parents to the writing process through creative activities such as "shape" poetry, writing dialogue for unique characters and situations, and completing sentences with a touch of humor.

History/Background

Courses for parents in the area of basic skills are not new to Neptune Township. In the early 1980's, the district offered a course for parents on learning centers entitled "Make It - Take It." Funded through a state

compensatory education grant, the course was so successful that it was used as a demonstration project throughout the state. The OSR program has enabled the district to take the next step and offer courses which involve both students and parents.

Resources

While the actual costs of the Homework for the Family courses are relatively small, OSR funds clearly have enabled the program to become a reality. Expenses in the first year included:

- personnel. Teachers are paid at the rate of $10 per hour for four two-hour sessions per course. Personnel costs for the five courses offered in the first year totaled $400.

- materials. Each teacher is provided with a small budget for supplies. The greatest expense is for copier paper to provide take- home materials, although some math activities also require consumables such as M&Ms and gum drops. Expenses for materials in the five courses total approximately $200 the first year.

- waiver of registration fees. OSR funds have enabled the district to waive the usual Neptune Community School registration fee of $2. Eighty families participated in the first year, for a total of $160.

Implementation

Successful implementation of the Homework for the Family program is the result of community support, the existence of a well-established community adult school, committed teachers, and appropriate scheduling.

- Community Support. The Neptune Township community, as well as the schools, has a keen interest in strengthening parent involvement in education. Each PTO president agreed to include information on the courses at a regular meeting, and each public and parochial elementary school sent letters and flyers to students' homes.

- Community Adult School. Homework for the Family courses are offered through the Neptune community adult school at its main facility, Neptune Senior High. The courses are advertised in the community school's bulletin which is mailed to every household in Neptune Township and to residents in neighboring communities. The community school also handles registration for the program.

- Committed Teachers. The program is simple and inexpensive, but its implementation is dependent on the availability of teachers who are not only gifted in working with parents and children, but also recognize the importance of such an effort. While OSR funds provide a small compensation to the teachers in the program, if the program is to continue and thrive, additional funds may be necessary to compensate the teachers more fairly and to pay for the considerable pre-planning time the program requires.

- Scheduling. Care has been taken to avoid conflicts with sports activities and potential snow problems in scheduling the courses. In the first year, courses were offered in October and March.

Effectiveness

Community response to the program can be seen in the enrollment figures. The fall math class enrolled 11 families. In the spring, 16 families enrolled in the math class and 17 in the writing course. Thirty-six families enrolled in the reading class, necessitating a split into two sections. Some parents attended the courses on alternate nights; others brought their entire family for each session.

The district administrator of the program, who observed each class session, distributed a survey form to all parents and students at the end of each course. Their comments, and those of the teachers, suggest that the program has been successful in:

- providing "special time" for students and their parents to be together. As one child stated, "It helps me be close to my father." Teachers note that even the ride to and from school can provide the child with precious moments of a parent's full attention. In school on the day after an evening course, they see "more smiles on the faces of students because a parent took a special interest in them the night before."

- strengthening family/school relationships. Teachers work hard to establish a relaxing environment where parents and children can explore basic skills. They observe that parents become more confident with each class. As one noted, "At the end of the course it felt like a family." One parent wrote of her son, "Just the idea of us going to school together has helped him get over his fears about reading."

- involving parents in the educational process. Parents report that they have a better understanding of what their child is doing in school and how they can help. One parent wrote, "The class has enabled us to see how the school is presenting math, and gives us the chance to learn some tips that are useful in helping our daughter."

There is also evidence that the program is having a snowball effect, illustrated by consideration of a new course to be taught by the children's librarian. The cooperative efforts of the reading teachers, and the enthusiastic response of parents and children who visited the library, may have contributed to this possibility.

The growing interest in the program and the participants' enthusiasm are creating a momentum that will be of great help when OSR funds no longer provide financial support.

Individualized Writing Program

(Neptune Township School District)

Objective

Neptune Senior High School seeks to improve student writing skills through individualized instruction and increased time on writing tasks.

Description

Neptune Senior High School's Individualized Writing Program (IWP) is one component of the district's comprehensive effort to improve student writing skills. The IWP is a writing tutorial program, offered throughout the school day, which provides intensive individual assistance to help students improve their writing skills. The IWP is staffed by high school English teachers and is considered one of their five instructional periods.

Although priority is given to students with identified writing problems, nearly every student participates in the program at some time during the school year, some as many as five times. IWP teachers diagnose individual student needs and provide instruction in specific writing skills outlined in the district's curriculum manual entitled The Neptune Plan for Teaching the Writing Process. The process is described under the acronym BORED -- Brainstorm, Organize, Roughdraft, Edit, Done!

History/Background

Neptune Township School District has long recognized the need to address student writing skills. Writing was identified as a priority by the district supervisor (now high school English department chair) nearly ten year ago, and supported in a needs assessment by teaching staff approximately six years ago. The OSR planning process and the availability of OSR funds provided the impetus for the Individualized Writing Program.

Resources

The primary cost of the Individualized Writing Program is for the salaries of two teachers to cover the English classes that would have been taught by the IWP teachers. In addition, IWP teachers have had a budget of approximately $500 for instructional materials and other resources.

Implementation

Implementation of the Individualized Writing Program at Neptune High School has required:

- adjustments in scheduling. IWP teachers are assigned one IWP period in place of a class assignment; students are scheduled into the

program on an individualized basis from their English classes or study halls.

- additional staff. Neptune Township Public Schools hired two additional high school English teachers to cover the classes that would have been taught by IWP teachers during their IWP periods.

- training. IWP required specific training in the teaching of writing skills and the Neptune writing framework. IWP teachers have focused on the teaching of writing in their individual Professional Improvement Plans (PIP).

- space. IWP needs an environment that supports quiet, small group activities and provides storage space. At Neptune, the library, English bookroom, and unused classrooms provided the necessary space.

- faculty support. The movement of students in and out of classes to attend IWP sessions affects all English teachers, and the program potentially impacts on all teachers. Good communication with the entire faculty regarding the objectives of IWP and how it operates has been an essential component of the program's success.

Effectiveness

The Individualized Writing Program has positively affected student writing skills, improved relationships between students and teachers, and increased job satisfaction on the part of IWP teachers.

Both students and teachers report that IWP sessions have improved student writing skills and that this improvement carries over into subjects other than English (e.g., history papers and science lab reports). Students say they "never used to edit," but have been surprised at what 10 minutes of revising can do to improve their work. They say they feel more confident when approaching writing tasks.

The enthusiasm of the first student participants, initially described as "reluctant writers," was communicated to peers, increasing in the positive attitudes of subsequent students toward the experience. In addition, IWP teachers report that the process has generated productive discussions among teachers and students about writing and the writing process.

IWP teachers feel the program has positively affected their relationships with students and their satisfaction as professionals. As a result of the program's individualized approach, students have "opened up" and are more attentive and responsive. The teachers feel they can help students build self-esteem and stimulate intellectual growth. They speak of the joy they feel when they show a student how "weaknesses can be made into strengths."

Inservice Pullout Model in Math and Reading

(Neptune Township School District)

Objective

Neptune Township School District seeks to provide quality inservice opportunities for teachers and other staff to address important curriculum issues and to learn instructional strategies to increase student achievement.

Description

Neptune Township School District's Inservice Pullout program is based on the principle that teachers, as professionals, should have time during the working day to engage in continuing education and to discuss curriculum and instructional concerns with their peers. The program is organized to minimize both the amount of disruption to any one school and the number of substitutes needed on any day.

The district has provided two series of inservice pullout programs, one in math, and one in reading. Both series have provided an opportunity for participants to discuss and receive specific training in new district-wide curricula and objectives, and have addressed areas of program weakness identified through student performance on standardized tests.

The Math Inservice Pullout Program was initiated in 1984-85. In that first year, junior high math and basic skills teachers (grades 7-9) were "pulled" for a series of three half-day workshops. Since sessions were offered both morning and afternoon, only five substitutes were needed to cover the classes of 10 teachers on a given day. In the second year, junior high math teachers attended another series of three half-day sessions, and elementary teachers in grades 4-6 were pulled for half-day, grade-level workshops.

In 1986-87, teachers in all grades from kindergarten through grade nine attended pullout sessions. Elementary teachers were introduced to revisions in the district's K-6 mathematics objectives and curricula proposed to bring them into alignment with state objectives and High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) benchmark skills. Participants worked on finalizing the objectives statements, learned problem solving and other instructional techniques to achieve the objectives, and received classroom materials. For example, kindergarten teachers were given pattern blocks and shown how these hands-on concrete materials could be used with their students.

Junior high teachers focused on an item analysis of those sections of the HSPT, particularly pre-algebra and estimation, on which students' performance had been particularly poor. They developed a report on student strengths and weaknesses, and made decisions on how to teach the areas of weakness more effectively.

The Reading Inservice Pullout Program began in 1985-1986 with a full-day program for K-12 staff to review district results from the HSPT and the California Achievement Test (CAT), and to identify the specific test-taking skills students need to learn. Second year programs included another HSPT workshop. In addition, the workshop addressed reading in the content areas. Trainers reviewed vocabulary development and trained participants in specific reading instruction and assessment strategies which could be incorporated in non-reading classes. Pullout sessions were also used to introduce a district-wide reading series. In the second year, the same all-day workshop was repeated on three consecutive days, attended by one representative per school per day.

History/Background

Prior to OSR, the Neptune School District had limited success in providing inservice opportunities for teachers. It had difficulty attracting teachers to after-school programs, and only 40 percent of the faculty attended summer inservice programs. It was suggested that the stipend of $10 per hour did not provide sufficient incentive for participation. The availability of funds through OSR provided the district with an opportunity to address its inservice problem.

With the availability of funds, the district focused on designing an inservice pullout as a means to involve teachers in proposed curriculum changes in math and reading, and to help them develop the instructional skills necessary to improve student performance on the HSPT.

Resources

The primary costs of the Inservice Pullout Program have been for substitute teachers. Substitutes are paid between $40 and $45 per day. The program is organized so that if 12 teachers attend a half-day inservice, only six substitutes are needed, at a cost of approximately $240-$250. Generally, in the three-day workshop series, one substitute was assigned to each building each day.

Other costs were for lunches at all-day workshops, stipends for guest facilitators, and a small budget for learning materials and supplies.

Implementation

As with many of the OSR programs, the availability of funds provided an important impetus in helping the district to design new ways to deal with old problems. However, funds are only a small part of the implementation process. Although designed and introduced by central district staff, the program has been successfully implemented because of widespread support of both teachers and administrators.

- Teacher support is due in large part to the fact that the program recognizes the professional nature of their job and provides time

during the workday for continuing education and dialogue with peers. In addition, teachers view the content of the inservice programs as important and relevant, particularly the opportunities to plan in-class experiences related to HSPT benchmark skills and to learn how to use concrete materials to teach key concepts.

- Principals support the program in part because of the minimal disruptions at the building level.

Effectiveness

Each participant in an inservice pullout program has been asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire. Responses have indicated consistently high ratings for:

- the manner in which the program is conducted. Participants appreciate the opportunity to spend a half or whole day with colleagues from different schools in a professionally enriching and stimulating experience. They feel their contributions to workshop discussions are valued by the district, and praise the manner in which information is presented and the small size and relaxed, informal nature of the workshops.

- the utility of the content and materials. Participants report that they learn valuable instructional strategies in the workshops and that the materials they receive are both useful and appropriate for their classes. They are "more conscious of the HSPT" and are developing new ways to teach skills assessed by the test.

Other indicators of how well the Inservice Program has achieved its objectives are:

- administrators report that the program has done much to create positive feelings among school staff about their work as teachers as well as about OSR

- the workshops have stimulated some teachers to become more active in related activities, such as participating in after school tutorial programs for students who fail the HSPT

- attendance rates at voluntary summer inservice workshops have been high

- student performance district-wide on the 1987 HSPT was the highest ever, suggesting that teachers are implementing the instructional strategies they learn at the pullout workshops.

As a result of such evidence, the Inservice Pullout Model is fast becoming the primary deliverary mode for all inservice activities in the Neptune Township School District.

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Junior High School #1

(Trenton School District)

Objective

Trenton's Junior High School #1 (JHS#1) seeks to improve the academic performance, behavior, and attendance of its students through systematic, objectives-based instruction in a safe, personal environment.

Description

JHS#1's integrated skills approach to instruction is part of an effort to move toward "a true middle school." The program involves the entire instructional staff in a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, testing, and replanning that includes:

- identification of skill priorities to be stressed in instruction
- development of appropriate instructional activities across content areas to teach the skill priorities
- instruction
- administration of skill tests
- item analysis of student performance on skill tests.

The program is supported by a reorganization of space and instructional units, and the provision of regular, scheduled opportunities for staff to plan and make instructional decisions together. The following two sections describe these features.

Organization for Instruction. JHS#1 has organized space, staff, and time to create "a series of schools within a school." The intent is to provide a safe, personal environment in which behavior is controlled and students know and are known by their teachers, and to increase instructional time.

Each grade is organized into instructional teams or "pods" and located in a contained part of the building. The seventh and ninth grades each have their own floor; the eighth grade is located on two floors and scheduled so that students need to use the stairs only twice daily. Classrooms for a given team or pod are located in close proximity to each other, and guidance counselors and other support personnel work in areas closest to the group of students they serve.

- Seventh Grade Teams. Seventh grade teams are composed of 40-50 students and two teachers, one who teaches language arts and social studies and the other math and science in classes scheduled back-to-back. Students are grouped on the basis of instructional need as

determined by tests and teacher recommendations. The team organization, by reducing the number of hall-passings, has increased instructional time; class periods are now 50 rather than 45 minutes. In addition, the back-to-back classes give teachers more flexibility in the use of time; for example, they can "borrow" from one class to complete a task in the other and make it up another day. All seventh graders are scheduled for gym during the same period, which frees the teachers for joint planning activities.

- Eighth and Ninth Grade "Pods". Pods are self-contained instructional units composed of approximately 125 students and their science, math, English/reading, social studies, and basic skills teachers, a guidance counselor, and support staff. Students within a pod are grouped into academic, business, or general courses of study. The teachers in each pod determine the instructional needs of their students, and have planning time made available through a scheduling procedure similar to that of the seventh grade.

- Transition Classes. Each grade has a "transition class," an in-school alternative to suspension for the temporary placement of students who are consistently disruptive in their regular classrooms. Transition classes serve up to 12 students at a time who work on an assignment provided by their regular teachers. The students, who stay up to a week, also meet intensively with the guidance staff. When they demonstrate that they have corrected or modified their behavior, they return to their classes.

Planning for Instruction. An essential component of the integrated skills approach is regularly scheduled planning time for instructional staff. At JHS#1, all teachers have one joint planning period and one personal planning period in addition to four instructional periods per day. Joint planning time is used for grade-level meetings, and for meetings of teams or pods.

- Grade Level Planning. Once each quarter, grade level staffs meet to set out the next quarter's instructional plan. Thereafter, there may be as many as two grade level meetings each week focusing on some aspect of the continuous "cycle of instruction" (item analysis of test scores, planning cross-content area instruction, retesting, and conducting further analysis of test items).

- Team and Pod Meetings. Staffs of teams and pods meet on a regular basis to decide upon HSPT skills to be emphasized and develop plans to reinforce those skills across the content areas. They also use this time to address individual student needs, identify concerns to be handled by the guidance department or supervisory staff, schedule exams, or discuss issues such as student attendance or motivation, uniform expectations for student behavior, or policies regarding make-up work for students who have been absent.

In addition, some planning time is used for collaborative planning among teachers in the same content area or with similar ability groups. Most importantly, the common planning time gives teachers the opportunity to discuss general concerns, share professional expertise, and develop classroom policies that complement school-wide improvement efforts.

Decisions on policies or actions may differ among grade levels and among teams and pods within a grade level. For example, a seventh grade team may decide that homogeneous grouping has not met the needs of its students and teachers, while another team may continue to use it.

History/Background

Junior High School #1 sought, for several years, to deal with pervasive problems of low student achievement and low student and teacher morale. Disruptive behavior was a constant problem in its large facility, where students could easily be lost in a crowded hallway or large classroom.

In 1981, the school instituted the self-contained seventh grade to minimize the trauma of transition from elementary school and to create a more personal environment for the newcomers. However, the problems of the school remained.

The decision to move to the integrated skills approach to instruction, and consequent reorganization of the school were influenced by two OSR programs.

- Achievement Directed Leadership (ADL) Training. Through an OSR program, all principals in the district were trained in ADL, a school management system designed to improve student achievement in basic skills (an RBS developed program). ADL is based on research which suggests that students who spend an adequate amount of time covering, mastering, and reviewing content on which they will be tested are more likely to perform better on year-end achievement tests than students who do not. Educators are encouraged to pay particular attention to the amount of time students actually spend on assigned learning tasks, their daily success, and their mastery of unit contents.

- District Instructional Planning Guides. In another OSR program, the district developed Instructional Planning Guides designed to facilitate an integrated skills approach to instruction and testing, thereby improving academic performance. The approach requires that teachers across the content areas teach the same skills at the same time, reinforcing HSPT skill attainment simultaneously in all of a student's classes.

Resources

The integrated skills approach at JHS#1 involves no costs beyond the operating budget of the school. In fact, staffing patterns were established in such a way that the administration was able to absorb the loss of three teachers from the school and still assign three full-time teachers to the transition classes.

Implementation

Support for the program at the state, district, and building level made it possible for JHS#1 to implement the integrated skills approach.

- State Support. The Urban Initiative's OSR served to create a climate for change and innovation.

- District Support. The district's OSR Program in ADL and in developing Instructional Planning Guides reinforced the concept of an integrated skills approach to instruction. Trenton's Board of Education supported the plan outlined by JHS#1 as an example of school improvement efforts at the building level.

- Building Level Support. JHS#1 had a principal who was willing, inspired, and "brave enough" to implement a program that required the total reorganization of the school. The vice principal for curriculum and instruction, who had helped design the Instructional Planning Guides, wanted to help develop an integrated skills approach at the building level. Successful implementation of the program also presents some unique challenges, that include:

  -- overcoming structural limitations of the school building to accommodate the placement of grade levels in self-contained areas

  -- organizing staff so that all seventh and eighth grade core subject teachers are K-8 certified

  -- scheduling time on a daily basis so that faculty can meet, plan, and problem solve together

  -- providing strong administrative leadership knowledgeable in instructional management programs such as ADL.

Effectiveness

Preliminary evidence of the effectiveness of the integrated skills approach after one year is available for JHS#1 staff, student achievement scores on standardized tests, student attendance rates, the incidence of disruptive behavior, and continued district support for the program.

Effect on Staff. Perhaps the most remarkable effect of the program has been on the staff.

- Morale. The staff are beginning to acquire more positive attitudes about the school. The principal observes, "Our school is beginning to believe that we are better than all the others."

- Involvement. Teacher planning meetings are characterized by enthused and motivated teachers who are deeply involved in making professional decisions designed to meet the needs of their students.

- Commitment. Staff are committed to the success of the program and believe it is vitally important in helping them achieve their own goals. "Just watch the reaction of the teachers," grinned the principal, "if you told them that the program was over."

- Attendance and Turnover Rates. Teacher attendance during the first year of the program was 95 percent, up seven percent over the previous year. Turnover was minimal, the loss of only two out of 28 teachers. One administrator notes, "We are rapidly becoming a veteran staff."

Administrators believe that the teachers' positive attitudes are the result of the opportunity to make professional decisions among themselves, to have easy access to the administration, and to influence administrative decisions.

Student Achievement. Promising gains in student scores on all three skill areas of the HSPT are evident after the program's first year. These gains could be attributed to a whole range of school interventions. However, they do illustrate the positive direction the school is taking.

Percent of Students Passing the HSPT

	86	87	Increase
Reading	41.2 (50.8)	77.9* (69.6)	+ 36.7 (+18.8)
Mathematics	31.8 (39.9)	38.6 (42.0)	+ 6.8 (+ 2.1)
Writing	39.2 (46.8)	60.5 (62.0)	+ 21.3 (+15.2)

( ) = district averages
* = exceeds minimal level of proficiency

Gains on the California Achievement Test (CAT) are also evident, though less dramatic. The greatest increase can be seen in eighth grade reading scores, up 15.4 percentile points in one year. Other gains are in ninth grade reading, up 4.6 percentile points, and ninth grade math, up 5.6 percentile points. While the average scores in reading remain below those of other junior highs in the district, the gap was narrowed, from a 10.1 percentile point difference in 1986 to a 4.5 percentile point difference in 1987. Math scores remained below the district average with little change (-4.8 percentile points in 1986; -4.5 in 1987).

Student Attendance Rates. Attendance rates gained impressively over previous years. By April 1987, JHS#1 had achieved a 91.67 percent attendance rate, the highest of all junior highs in the district, representing a gain of 3.93 percent over 1986 and 6.63 percent over 1985.

Disruptive Behavior. Teachers and administrators report fewer disruptions in the hallways, which they attribute directly to the new, reduced traffic patterns in the school. They also observe fewer disruptions in the classroom.

District Support. Another indicator of the program's evolving strength is evidenced in the district office's continuing support. District staff have encouraged other junior highs to learn about the model, and have provided JHS#1 staff with opportunities to make presentations at administrative and staff inservice meetings.

Grant Elementary School

(Trenton School District)

Objective

Grant Elementary School seeks to maintain a total school effort to improve student performance on academic achievement tests.

Description

The improvement of academic performance is the focal point at Grant Elementary School. The principal believes that the goal of improved student performance can be achieved only through a total staff commitment which includes:

- involvement in the professional decisions necessary to achieve the goal
- accountability for professional performance.

At Grant School, the total staff is regularly involved in identifying problems and designing strategies to improve student achievement. The principal has introduced bi-weekly grade-level planning sessions that occur during the school day and give teachers the opportunity to work together to assess student progress and plan appropriate interventions for a wide range of problems. Two programs serve as examples of the results of staff problem solving and decision making: the Basic Skills Cluster and the Academic Olympics.

Basic Skills Cluster. The Basic Skills Cluster is designed as an alternative to "pull-out" programs in which individual children are removed from their regular classes at frequent intervals to receive special help in the basic skills. The model is designed to:

- reduce the amount of disruption caused by the movement of children in and out of classrooms
- reduce the stigmatization and isolation of children who need special help
- coordinate instruction in basic skills classes with that in the regular classroom.

In the Cluster concept, small groups of second and third graders who need remedial help in the three areas of reading, writing, and math spend two hours a day with basic skills teachers who work with them both individually and as a group. The basic skills and regular classroom teachers work together to identify instructional goals so that remedial work is followed up by developmental instruction in the regular classroom. The staff plans to expand the Cluster program to the upper grades.

Academic Olympics. The Academic Olympics is a school-wide competitive event, timed to take place after spring achievement testing. It is designed to:

- recognize and reward academic achievement
- foster motivation for learning to the end of the school year.

Students compete in three rounds of tests, with successive eliminations. The tests focus on reading, math, and general knowledge, and are prepared by school staff. They become progressively more difficult, but are easy enough at the beginning so that every student can answer some questions.

In the Olympic tradition, there are a great many ceremonial events. In the first year, the opening ceremony was an assembly with the theme "A Garden of Knowledge," which featured student music, dance, and skits to explain the Olympics and generate excitement. Teachers on the planning team wore bright tee-shirts reading "Grant School - Reach High to Achieve," and each child received a "Grant School Eagles" button. Prizes, which ranged from buttons, head bands, and book bags to the grand prize, a computer, were described.

After each round, the winners were notified in a way designed to create great excitement and to guarantee public recognition. Accompanied by student musicians playing the Olympic theme song and carrying a "Reach High to Achieve" banner, the planning team made formal presentations in the students' classrooms. Students who won in more than one category received more highly valued prizes, and the names of the final winners in all three categories at each grade level were placed in a lottery pool. The closing ceremonies included dancing, a sing-a-long, and the drawing for the computer.

The principal has worked to establish positive structures to monitor staff effectiveness and to foster accountability for professional performance. These include:

- Quarterly Skills Success Rate Reports, which teachers use to track the percentage of their students who successfully demonstrate the reading, math, and writing skills tested during a school quarter. If their class success rate for any given skill falls below 80 percent, they also report how they plan to teach that skill in the future.
- An Instructional Events Checklist, developed through the Achievement Directed Leadership (ADL) program, which the principal uses in classroom visits to identify how teachers present information, how students engage with the information, and how teachers monitor success. The checklist helps her to communicate the standards she believes should be present in teaching and to articulate what she observed in the classroom.

History/Background

Grant School serves a community of high mobility. The enrollment fluctuates around 650 students in kindergarten through seventh grade. Most of the students come from minority groups; one-third are Hispanic, half of whom have limited English proficiency. Nearly 100 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch. The school also houses a special education program, and one class of seventh graders is bussed in from around the district. In 1985, Grant School ranked lowest in academic achievement scores of the district's 17 elementary schools.

The first priority of the principal when she arrived in 1983 was to create an orderly and safe environment. By the end of her first year, significant progress had been made in that direction, allowing the staff to begin to look at the urgent question of pupil performance. The OSR planning process and objectives provided a structure for the principal and staff to address the school's academic problems. Their efforts were reinforced by the district's OSR-supported training program for principals in Achievement Directed Leadership, a management system that focuses on instructional leadership and provides inservice materials to be used with school staffs. The district's Instructional Curriculum Guides, which aligned each grade's curriculum with skills to be tested, provided additional resources.

Resources

Grant School's efforts have involved very little monetary costs. The only real expenses have been to provide prizes beyond those donated by the community for the Academic Olympics (approximately $2,500 for OSR), and staff is convinced that the Olympics will continue when there is no outside money available.

Implementation

The intense focus on the goal of improving student performance at Grant Elementary is a total, school-wide effort. The principal states, "If you're going to tell me that a child can't do it, you're in the wrong place." Principal and staff take advantage of every opportunity and available resource to successfully implement activities and programs to achieve their goal. For example:

- both principal and teachers have made the goal of improving student academic performance the central component of their Professional Improvement Plans (PIP), and all inservice and other professional experiences are designed to address that goal.

- district policies and mandates are viewed in a positive way, as providing support to improvement efforts. The principal uses district policies that require her to monitor teacher lessons and quarterly plans, and her training in ADL to present a positive structure for staff accountability. The staff uses the district's

Instructional Curriculum Guides as a resource in planning classroom activities. The principal frequently states, "The district policy models are good, the district resources are good. What makes them work for us is effort."

- the staff works to turn impediments into positives. For example, in the past, parents were viewed as unsupportive of, even disruptive to, the education program. Parents commonly interrupted class routines as they sought the ear of their child's teacher. Staff worked hard to do a better job of informing parents of school rules, of how the rules benefitted their children, and how they could help. New policies for parents' visits were strictly enforced. At the same time, the principal was on the front steps of the school every morning and afternoon to be accessible to parents, and the school initiated a series of parent programs on special topics, such as summer opportunities for children. All staff participate in these get-togethers, which tend to be informal and well-attended.

Effectiveness

Dramatic evidence of the effectiveness of Grant School's efforts can be seen in the students' 1987 scores on the California Achievement Test (CAT). From a ranking at the bottom of the district's 17 elementary schools in previous years, Grant moved to eighth place in reading, seventh in math, and eleventh in language. These gains could be attributed to a whole range of school interventions. However, they do illustrate the positive direction the school is taking.

The gains in reading and math within each grade level over the previous year's CAT are impressive.

1987 CAT Percentile Scores and Gains Over Previous Year

Grade	Reading	Math
K	83.2 (+10.7)	85.9 (+4.2)
1	52.0 (+11.1)	69.7 (+5.9)
2	52.4 (+.4)	63.5 (-2.5)
3	65.0 (+26.1)	78.6 (+11.9)
4	48.4 (+13.3)	74.0 (+18.2)
5	56.4 (+20.7)	70.8 (+9.3)
6	80.2 (+37.2)	94.4 (+22.4)

In some grades there were even more impressive gains over a two-year period. For example, kindergarten gained 28 percentile points in reading and 24.4 percentile points in math. The third grade gained 32.2 percentile points in reading. The sixth grade gained 47.5 in reading and 43.2 in math.

While achievement scores are the bottom line indicator of success, other results of the school's efforts are evident in the Basic Skills Cluster, the Academic Olympics, and the parent involvement programs.

- Basic Skills Cluster. The reorganization of children for basic skills instruction has resulted in less disruption of classroom routines and created a new "esprit de corps" among the basic skills students. Grade level and basic skills teachers feel they give more attention to their students and are positive about their ability to work collaboratively to plan appropriate instructional activities.

- Academic Olympics. The staff believes the Olympics far exceeded the goal of maintaining motivation and is surprised by the unexpected consequences of the activity. They note the emergence of "sleepers," students who did not excel previously, but who were winners in the Olympics. Both teachers and other students have come to view these students differently, and the students themselves have continued to blossom even without the excitement of the Olympics.

- Parent Involvement. Parents are attending the school's special sessions in large numbers, and the staff reports that they are abiding by school rules and apparently are supporting their children in ways that reinforce the school's goal. The principal observes, "Parents have become more informed of what their child needs to be able to do. That is important to us."

Nassau Elementary School

(East Orange School District)

Objective

Nassau Elementary School seeks to maintain a total school effort to improve the academic achievement of its students.

Description

Nassau Elementary School has introduced a number of programs and activities that involve the entire staff in an effort to improve the academic performance of its students.

Each year the staff meets as a group to establish instructional objectives for the year. With the assistance of a resource teacher, teachers do a task analysis of student performance on the California Achievement Test (CAT) to identify the skill areas in which students need the most help. The results are used to establish priorities according to the areas of greatest need and to determine the sequence of skills to be taught across the grade levels. Students are then grouped for instruction by ability level in reading and math. Individual student improvement plans are developed for students who qualify for remedial help in the basic skills.

Throughout the year, the staff meets on a regular basis to monitor students' progress and the pacing of skill development. The Prescriptive Reading Inventory (PRI) and the Diagnostic Math Inventory (DMI) are administered to provide additional diagnostic information. The results are analyzed to identify areas for review and reteaching, and the staff works together to solve common problems to improve student performance.

The school has initiated a variety of activities to support achievement. For example, each classroom now has its own library, and a special silent reading period is part of each day's schedule. Students are required to write in all content areas daily, and the principal requires samples of student writing from teachers on a regular basis.

These efforts have been supported by inservice activities for the teaching staff. Through training programs such as the Program for Effective Teaching and Supervision (PETS), the staff has focused on developing teaching strategies to foster critical thinking and problem solving skills, reading in the content areas, writing across the disciplines, motivation, and human relations skills.

History/Background

Both the East Orange School District as a whole and Nassau Elementary School had been working to improve performance in basic skills prior to

OSR. However, OSR provided the resources that enabled the district and school to provide inservice workshops during the school day on task analysis, selecting objectives, and monitoring and adjusting instruction to support academic achievement.

Resources

The costs of the Nassau program beyond the school's operating budget have been minimal. Approximately $2,000 has been available to the school to support the inservice program and instructional materials.

Implementation

Implementation of the total school effort to improve student academic performance has been facilitated by the leadership of the East Orange School District who has been very supportive to the program. The program has also been helped by parent participation and positive community reaction.

The staff feels their efforts would be further supported by:

- more adequate funding for improvement efforts
- additional inservice training in how to motivate students
- the establishment of a "time out" room for the temporary placement of students who evidence disruptive behavior in their regular classroom
- more parent participation.

Effectiveness

Nassau Elementary School's focus on academic performance has resulted in much improved student achievement scores on standardized tests. In addition, the staff reports that since the program's inception, attendance has risen to 92 percent and that there are less disruptions, fewer suspensions, and less vandalism.

Franklin Elementary School

(East Orange School District)

Objective

Franklin Elementary School seeks to maintain a cycle of planning and instruction across the content areas in a total school effort to improve the academic performance of its students.

Description

Franklin Elementary School has established a number of programs and activities that involve the entire staff in an effort to improve the academic performance of its students. The core of the school's efforts is a cycle of planning and instruction across the content areas that includes:

- analyzing student performance on diagnostic and achievement tests
- setting appropriate instructional objectives, priorities, and pacing for each student group
- planning and conducting instructional activities
- regular testing to assess student progress and make necessary adjustments in instruction.

The teachers establish the instructional priorities for their classes on an individual basis and participate in monthly grade level meetings that focus on developing instructional strategies to achieve their objectives. They are both supported and monitored by the school's basic skills resource teachers and by the principal. The resource teachers maintain a record of the sequence of instruction and the results of all student testing in each classroom. They use this information to monitor the pace of instruction and the degree to which each class is achieving the identified objectives. If a class falls below the goal of 80 percent mastery in a given skill area, the resource teacher may provide resource materials to the teacher or actually teach the lesson. If many teachers are having difficulty teaching a particular skill, the resource teacher may hold an inservice training session. The principal maintains a total school profile that is based on monthly progress reports in the basic skill areas submitted by each teacher.

The emphasis on academic achievement is supported by a parallel program which intends to generate enthusiasm for school and provide rewards, such as certificates, pizza parties, tee-shirts, and other similar items, for meeting the school's attendance goals.

History/Background

Prior to OSR, Franklin Elementary School had initiated efforts to improve the academic achievement of its students. The school pilot tested several innovative projects in the district, including peer tutoring and co-op teaching as well as Project Balloon and the Tender Loving Care Club, which matched individual students with a caring adult in the school. The OSR program provided the impetus for the school to plan and implement a comprehensive, school-wide effort to address academic performance.

Resources

The costs of Franklin Elementary School's program, beyond the operating budget of the school, have been minimal. OSR provided approximately $2,000, which has supported inservice training, instructional materials, and the reward system.

Implementation

Implementation of Franklin Elementary School's program has been facilitated by:

- the support and resources of the East Orange School District administration, including a school planning guide
- the availability of basic skills resource teachers who provide support and materials to the staff in their instructional improvement efforts
- the support of parent volunteers

Effectiveness

The program at Franklin Elementary has produced higher student scores on academic achievement tests. However, the program's success has also produced a paradoxical problem--teaching staff wonders if as more students achieve academically through the OSR program, the compensatory education funds that support the basic skills staff of the school will be reduced. They are concerned that the school may lose basic skills staff who are necessary to maintain the program's momentum.

Sojourner Truth Middle School

(East Orange School District)

Objective

Sojourner Truth Middle School seeks to improve the academic achievement of its students through an instructional management system which monitors instruction and student learning in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Description

The heart of the effort to improve academic achievement at Sojourner Truth Middle School is an instructional management program. Under the acronym STAMP, for Sojourner Truth Achievement Management Plan, the program provides a system for monitoring both instruction and student learning. In its first year, STAMP has focused on reading, writing, and mathematics, curricular areas in which student achievement scores have traditionally been poor.

STAMP involves the principal and classroom and resource teachers in a continuous process that includes:

- analysis of student performance on achievement tests to develop a list of skill deficiencies at each grade level and to assign priorities for instruction
- development of a timeline for instruction in the identified skills
- grouping of students for instruction
- monitoring of instruction and student progress in mastering the identified skills.

The improvement effort in reading is administered and monitored by a resource teacher, and criterion referenced tests are periodically administered to assess student progress. Student progress in mathematics is monitored through grade level tests and grade level meetings of mathematics teachers. In writing, teachers use a writing checklist to assess student performance and submit samples of student writing to the principal each month.

Staff training is also part of the school's effort to improve achievement. All staff attended training sessions in the Program for Effective Teaching and Supervision (PETS) during the summer of 1986 and throughout the school year 1986-87. Teachers also attended sessions on mapping curriculum and aligning it with assessment tests and on grouping students for class instruction.

History/Background

Some improvement efforts at Sojourner Truth Middle School were initiated as part of a district-wide emphasis on basic skills prior to OSR. However, the OSR planning phase in 1985-1986 coincided with the first year of the school's new principal, providing her with the opportunity to shape the direction of current improvement efforts. The first full year of implementation of STAMP was in 1986-1987.

Resources

OSR funds for improvement efforts at Sojourner Truth amounted to $500 for instructional materials and $500 for consultant fees during the first year.

Implementation

Implementation of the achievement program at Sojourner Truth has been facilitated by strong parent involvement and support, particularly through the school's parent-teacher organization which has been increasingly active. The staff considers that the program was hampered in its first year, however, by:

- the unavailability on the school staff of a math resource teacher to administer and monitor improvement efforts in that area of the curriculum
- time constraints which made it more difficult to schedule the necessary meetings and other activities
- concerns that the timetable for instruction did not allow for individual differences.

Effectiveness

The staff of Sojourner Truth Middle School is very positive about its achievement efforts through OSR. They cite:

- the coordination of effort between principal and staff to meet state standards
- the development of a process and timetable to insure that all teachers cover essential skills in instruction and the grouping of students to better address individual needs
- the exposure of students to sample test skills and content for which they will be responsible for mastering later

- the opportunity for the entire staff to be trained in the Program for Effective Teaching and Supervision and the provision of summer institutes for teachers

- the development of a gifted and talented program in the building.

The effect of the program can also be seen in gains in achievement scores. Many of the students have improved dramatically, particularly in reading.

PRINCIPAL EFFECTIVENESS

OSR OBJECTIVE: To increase the effectiveness of building principals in participating schools.

Overview of Program/Practices

The goal of the OSR principal effectiveness objective is to develop a cadre of principals who will serve as strong leaders in their districts. It is the only one of the five objectives that is planned for and implemented entirely at the district level. This section describes two examples of district programs, plus a recognition activity.

Assessor/Assessee Program (East Orange School District)

> A comprehensive program to enhance the skills of new administrators, develop a cadre of future administrators, and train experienced administrators to assess administrative performance.

District-Wide Principal Inservice Program (Neptune Township School District)

> A program to increase the effectiveness of principals and other instructional leaders through a comprehensive, collegial inservice program on instructional supervision.

Principal Recognition Activity (East Orange School District)

> An activity which recognizes principals, and their staff and students, who make exceptional progress in meeting OSR achievement and attendance goals.

The Neptune and East Orange programs have different specific objectives, but they share important commonalities.

- Use of State Resources. Both districts take advantage of state-level resources to train principals and other leaders. Neptune's inservice program is provided by the Department of Education's Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management. A significant component of East Orange's Assessor/Assessee Program is provided by the New Jersey Principals' Assessment Center.

- Research Based. The programs of both districts have a basis in effective schools research. In the Neptune Township program, principals are trained in a research based instructional supervision model. In East Orange, principals are both trained in and evaluated on 12 skill areas identified as important to effective leadership.

- Comprehensive Involvement. Both programs extend beyond principals and are designed to include a significant portion of district leadership in the same training at the same time. Neptune's

program involves all eight of the district's principals as well as 23 of the supervisory staff, all of whom now share a common vocabulary and understanding of instruction and a new sense of collegiality. East Orange involves 10 experienced administrators and 15 new and prospective district leaders in a program which expands the skills of each.

- Multi-Year Efforts. Both program are multi-year efforts aimed at significantly affecting leadership style and substance.

Assessor/Assessee Program

(East Orange School District)

Objective

East Orange School District seeks to enhance the skills of new administrators, develop a cadre of future administrators, and train experienced administrators to assess administrative performance.

Description

East Orange School District has developed a special Assessor/Assessee Program for administrators, coordinated by the central office. The "assessor" portion of the program trains experienced administrators to observe and evaluate administrative performance. The "assessee" portion trains new and prospective administrators in administrative skills.

Assessor Training Program. The assessor training program is conducted by the New Jersey Principals' Assessment Center. Administrators are trained to assess administrative performance in 12 skill areas considered important to effective leadership (e.g., decisiveness, and ability to work under stress). The program takes approximately 25 hours.

The first participants, trained in 1985-86, were selected on the basis of interest, administrative skills, and positive district evaluations. They included six principals, one supervisor, and an assistant director. The district superintendent and the program coordinator also took part in the training.

Assessee Training Program. The assessee program has three components: a comprehensive district inservice program; a Principal's Assessment Center evaluation; and a district administrative internship. Participants include administrators with less than three years of experience and "prospective administrators" (i.e., teachers who have earned a supervisory or principal's certificate).

In 1986-87, the first year of the program, three principals, one program coordinator, one supervisor, and 10 prospective administrators (designated the Cadet Corps) participated in one or more of the assessee training components.

- District Inservice Program. The district's inservice program involves 55 hours and is conducted after school from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., and on occasional Saturdays. The program includes presentations by central office personnel and outside consultants, homework assignments, and a practicum. In one assignment, assessees are asked to design an inservice program which includes goals and objectives, handouts, and procedures to involve participants. In another, they solve "in baskets," case studies of typical problems principals face. The program concludes with a weekend seminar at Scanticon Conference Center.

- Principals' Assessment Center Evaluation. The state's Principals' Assessment Center provides evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of new and prospective administrators in the 12 skill areas important to effective leadership. The assessment is performed by formally trained assessors, over a three-day period. At its conclusion, assessees receive both a written and oral evaluation.

- Administrative Internship. The administrative internship is designed for the Cadet Corps. Cadets have two internship experiences. The first is an all-day visit to a school to observe how it conducts standardized testing. The second is a two-day visit to assist a principal with end-of-the-year school closing responsibilities. A cadet may also assist with administrative duties throughout the school year.

History/Background

East Orange School District began planning the Assessor/Assessee Program during the 1984-85 school year, a period which coincided with OSR planning. OSR provided the impetus to refine the district's thinking about a Cadet Corps. The district has been involved with the state's Principals' Assessment Center since its inception, and identified it as a major resource to the program.

The program was initiated in 1985-86 with the training of the assessors. The first assessees were trained in 1986-87. The Cadet Corps participated in all three components of the assessee program and completed all but the internship by the end of 1987.

Resources

Much of the cost of the program is for Principals' Assessment Center training. Assessor training is $250 per person, plus travel, meals, and lodging. Assessee evaluations are $350 per person, plus expenses.

OSR funds covered the costs of the outside consultants who assisted with the assessee inservice program.

Implementation

East Orange School District has identified the improvement of administrative effectiveness as a priority. The philosophy and content of the Assessor/Assessee Program are consistent with this priority and complement other district programs that emphasize the principal's role in the evaluation (Program for Effective Teaching and Supervision) and clinical supervision (Achievement Directed Leadership). These factors greatly enhance the program's implementation.

Nevertheless, participants identified some problems with the program's implementation. Assessees in the district's inservice program feel they

do not always fully benefit from sessions held at the end of a full day of school. Some regret having to miss three full days of school for the Assessment Center evaluation. In addition, administrators in the assessee program had thought they would be trained rather than evaluated at the Assessment Center. Participants believe that improved communication regarding the purpose of the Center experience will address this issue.

Effectiveness

Participants are enthused about the district inservice component of the Assessee Program. They report the program helped them to better understand the district's standards and expectations for administrators and sharpened important administrative skills. The "in basket" case studies and the practicum are particularly valued by participants.

District-Wide Principal Inservice Program

(Neptune Township School District)

Objective

Neptune Township School District seeks to increase the effectiveness of its principals and other instructional leaders through a comprehensive, collegial inservice program on instructional supervision.

Description

Neptune Township School District provides a comprehensive inservice training program on instructional supervision for all its principals and other instructional leaders through the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management. The Academy, established by the State Department of Education in 1985, offers programs on research based instructional strategies to New Jersey administrators and teachers. Its programs focus on skill development through simulations, guided practice, and coaching. The Academy is supported by a combination of tuition and state dollars.

Neptune enrolled all eight of its principals, plus four vice-principals, five district-level supervisors, and 14 department chairs, in the Academy's Instructional Theory Into Practice (ITIP) program, the Madeline Hunter Model. Training was provided in two three-day sessions, one in each of two school years. The first session was designed to develop a common knowledge base regarding the Hunter model. Participants learned a common vocabulary, identified the elements of instruction, analyzed the presence of instructional skills in teaching, and explored the relationship between the elements of instruction and effective teaching. The second session focused on the supervision of instruction and on using ITIP to plan a staff development program.

History/Background

The OSR planning process encouraged the Neptune district to focus on increasing the effectiveness of its principals as instructional leaders. OSR funds provided the resources that enabled the district to provide a common and comprehensive training experience to all principals, as well as other instructional leaders, at the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management.

Resources

The primary costs associated with this program are for Academy fees, which amount to approximately $200 per person for each three-day period. OSR funds were instrumental in offsetting these costs. Additional costs are related to the time principals and other administrators are away from their jobs to attend the training sessions.

Implementation

The essential challenge of this program is to make the arrangements necessary to allow 31 principals and other administrators to be out of town during the same three-day period. In addition, some administrators were initially skeptical regarding the need for the program and resistant to the idea of spending six days of their time away from their jobs.

Effectiveness

Skepticism about the program did not last much longer than the first day of training. Principals report that as a result of the training they are much more aware of the details of teaching and have developed keener observation skills which have led to more productive conferences and post-observation conferences with their teachers. They feel confident that when they enter a classroom they "can do more than just look for straight shades and clean bulletin boards."

The second year of the program coincided with the arrival of a number of new department heads at the high school. Principals report that the training provided these new administrators with a common vocabulary and understanding of instruction and strengthened their ability to assist teachers.

Finally, principals value the collegial experience. They had never had the opportunity to spend three consecutive days with each other, and found that their shared experience was both stimulating and personally rewarding.

Principal Recognition Activity

(East Orange School District)

East Orange School District seeks to recognize the principals, and their staffs and students, who make exceptional progress in meeting OSR achievement and attendance goals.

East Orange School District conducted a principal recognition program at the end of the 1986-87 school year. The program included a roundtable workshop where guests could share information and success stories, a dinner, and a presentation of awards. A printed program included descriptions of the special qualities of the recognized schools.

Awards were given to those schools with the:

- greatest increase in average daily student attendance in the previous year
- greatest percentage increase in average daily student attendance over the previous year
- greatest average daily student attendance above the state average
- greatest average daily teacher attendance for 1986-87
- greatest increase in average daily teacher attendance over the previous year
- fewest student dropouts during the 1986-87 school year
- the most active parent/teacher association.

Individual awards, accepted by the principals on behalf of the recipients, were given to those teachers whose students had demonstrated significant attendance gains during the previous year. Academic achievement awards were presented for students who passed all three parts of the HSPT, received the highest scores on the SAT, and/or received National Merit Commendations.

The district also recognized a variety of individuals important to a school's success: principal's secretaries, the Board of Education OSR project managers, and the superintendent and other district administrators. One principal was named "Principal of the Year."

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

OSR OBJECTIVE: To reduce the reported incidence of disruptive behavior of pupils by 40 percent.

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Overview of Programs/Practices

This section describes six programs implemented by local school districts to reduce the incidence of disruptive behavior. Five of the programs focus specifically on the special problems of disruptive students. The exception, Neptune's Assertive Discipline Program, is designed for all elementary students in the district.

Assertive Discipline Program (ADP) (Neptune Township School District)

A program to train elementary school administrators and teachers in a systematic approach to discipline which includes clear rules, a system of rewards, and specified consequences for misbehavior.

Behavior Improvement Program (BIP) (East Orange School District)

A program to help disruptive elementary school students develop healthy self-concepts and competence in problem solving, decision making, and coping skills through the services of guidance counselors.

Family Consultation Program (East Orange School District)

A program to address through the services of a family counselor, the family problems that are related to the behavior of disruptive junior high and middle school students.

In-School Adjustment Center (ISAC) (Grant and Gregory Elementary Schools, Trenton School District)

A program to provide an appropriate alternative setting with academic and counseling support for disruptive elementary students who need a "time-out" from their regular classrooms and attention beyond normal classroom discipline.

Project Balloon (Franklin Elementary School, East Orange School District)

A project to provide personal and academic support to disruptive and other elementary school students through one-on-one relationships with individuals who serve as their "balloons."

Saturday Neptune Alternative Program (SNAP) (Neptune High School, Neptune Township School District)

A Saturday morning program to provide academic support and counseling to disruptive students in grades 9-12 as an alternative to suspension.

While the six programs represent a range of strategies for reducing disruptions in schools, they also share certain emphases (see Figure 3).

- The Importance of Counseling. Counseling is an essential component of four of the five programs designed specifically for disruptive students. The counselors in Trenton's In-School Adjustment Center and Neptune's Saturday Alternative Program help students to reflect on the behavior which led to their near-suspension and to work on constructive alternatives. In East Orange's Behavior Improvement Program, counselors help elementary students develop problem solving and decision making skills to replace disruptive behaviors. Its Family Consultation Program provides a counselor to help families identify home situations that are affecting student behavior in school.

- Academic Help. Three of the programs recognize that disruptive students often have academic problems as well. Both Trenton's In-School Adjustment Center and Neptune's Saturday Alternative are staffed with certified teachers who help students, whose behavior would have otherwise led to suspension, to keep up with their classwork and improve their level of performance. East Orange's Project Balloon provides individual tutoring to elementary students.

- Parent Support. All of the programs reflect the belief that parent support and involvement is an essential element in successful interventions with disruptive students. East Orange's Family Counselor works directly with students' families to solve problems leading to disruptive behavior. Both Trenton's In-School Adjustment Center and Neptune's Saturday Alternative Program require parents to meet with school staff when their children are referred. The three other programs all routinely include contact with parents in their work with disruptive students.

- Personal Relationships. Four programs emphasize the development of personal relationships with students whose behavior reflects alienation from school. The staffs of Neptune's Saturday Alternative Program and Trenton's In-School Center work to create a warm, caring environment and personal relationships with the students they serve. The focus of East Orange's Project Balloon is to provide a "lift" to a child through a personal relationship with another person in the school. The counselors in the Behavior Improvement Program often work individually to help a child develop a better self-concept as well as new coping skills.

- Alternative Environments. Two of the programs provide creative alternatives to the regular school environment where disruptive students have not been successful. Both Trenton's In-School Adjustment Center and Neptune's Saturday Alternative Program emphasize personal support to help such students return to their classrooms in a stronger position both academically and personally.

- Clear Expectations. Three of the programs reflect the importance of establishing and communicating clear expectations regarding student behavior. Neptune's Assertive Discipline Program trains teachers to communicate firm limits and to be consistent in both rewards and punishments. Both Trenton's In-School Adjustment Center and Neptune's Saturday Alternative Program require students and their parents to agree to established rules before the students enter the program.

Figure 3
Components of Disruptive Behavior Programs

Programs	Counseling	Academic Help	Parent Support	Personal Relationships	Alternative Environment	Clear Expectations	Target Audience	School or District-Level
Assertive Discipline Program			•			+	K-6 (All students)	District (with school sites)
Behavior Improvement Program	+		•	•			K-6 (students needing help)	District
Family Consultation	+		+				K-6 (students needing help)	District
In-School Adjustment Centers	+	+	•	•	+	•	K-7 (students needing help)	District (with school sites)
Project Balloon	•	+	•	+			K-6 (students needing help)	School
Saturday Neptune Alternative Program	•	+	•	+	+	•	9-12 (students needing help)	School

• = A component of the program
+ = a major component of the program

Assertive Discipline Program

(Neptune Township School District)

Objective

Neptune Township School District seeks to reduce the incidence of disruptive behavior throughout the district by training elementary school administrators and teachers in the Assertive Discipline Program (ADP).

Description

The Assertive Discipline Program (ADP) was developed by Lee Cantor to give educators the skills and confidence necessary to "take charge" in the classroom. The program advocates a systematic approach to discipline that enables teachers to set firm, consistent limits and to respond to a student's need for positive support. Assertive teachers are the "bosses" in the classroom who actively recognize and reinforce appropriate behavior.

The program involves a day-long training session, after which teachers develop systematic discipline plans for their own classrooms. The plans must include the general rules for behavior, a system of rewards, and five negative consequences for disruptive behavior, the last of which is a visit to the principal. When students break a rule, their name goes on the blackboard as a warning. A check is added for each additional disruption. The consequence for one check might be 15 minutes of after-school detention; for two checks, 30 minutes; for three checks, 30 minutes and a call to parents, and so forth.

The district first trained all elementary school principals in ADP, and followed up with a Saturday training session attended by most of the district's elementary teachers. Four of the district's six elementary schools decided to implement the program, adapting it to suit their staffs and students.

Shark River Hills Elementary illustrates one school's adaption of the model. Fifteen teachers attended the first round of training. They returned convinced that ADP would benefit their students and that it would be most effective if adopted school-wide. As a result, the entire staff adopted the program as part of their Professional Improvement Plans (PIP). Before the opening of school, teachers submitted their individual ADP plans to the principal, who worked with them in making refinements. Letters were then sent to parents describing the program.

Teachers have developed different approaches designed to work best for them. For example, one uses charts to keep track of names and checks. Another emphasizes positive consequences through a reward system of play currency which students use both to buy special opportunities and to pay fines for inappropriate behavior. The part-time librarian rewards younger students with little "pocket poems" and older ones with time on computers.

History/Background

Initially, the district saw the Assertive Discipline Program as a means of achieving the OSR principal effectiveness objective. The idea was to develop principals as school-based trainers who could assist their staffs in creating orderly learning environments. The principals were so enthusiastic about the program after their training that the district identified ADP as a means to achieve the OSR objective on disruptive behavior.

Resources

At the district level, the costs of the Assertive Discipline Program have been for:

- training of all elementary principals and teachers in the ADP model
- materials, including training manuals and tapes to assist principals in training new teachers in the program
- two half-day visits to each of the participating schools by a consultant from the Assertive Discipline Program to work with principals and check discipline plans.

At the building level, the primary resource necessary to implement the program is the time necessary for the principal and staff to develop, review, and refine individual discipline plans. A small sum of money may be necessary to assist staff in supplying rewards for positive behavior.

OSR funds helped to cover these costs as well as of paying teachers for the Saturday workshops.

Implementation

As suggested in previous sections, successful implementation of ADP is dependent on the ability to provide the necessary training in the program. Both principals and staff suggest that such training may be necessary for all segments of the school, including support staff who interact with students on a regular basis (e.g., cafeteria workers, bus drivers, custodians, aides, and secretaries). In at least one school, some support staff received some training, and the principal was enthusiastic about the results.

Effectiveness

The district's effort to introduce the Assertive Discipline Program throughout the elementary schools has been successful. Four of the six elementary schools are full participants. Attendance at the workshops for teachers has been excellent and teachers are including the ADP training as part of their Professional Improvement Plan. District workshops for parents were widely attended; 320 came to the first, 75 to the second.

The staff and principal at Shark River Hills Elementary provide further insight. Teachers talk about "the reawakening of being positive," and of yelling less because students know the consequences of negative behavior. One teacher observed that, while there weren't many discipline problems before, she feels she is more consistent and objective and finds this very satisfying. The part-time librarian feels she has to work harder on maintaining discipline in her other school, which has not adopted ADP. The principal reports that he sees fewer discipline problems in his office than ever before.

However, teachers have raised some concerns about the program. One suggests that principals may become unaware of discipline problems and teachers may become more involved in discipline matters than they would like. Because of the five-step consequence, students who used to be sent to the principal are kept in the classroom. Some teachers express the view that the ADP process interrupts their flow of instruction. Others ask: How does the negative consequence of having one's name on the board affect a child's self-concept and the learning environment? Does the program overemphasize student compliance? Does the program help children develop internal control? What is the carry-over effect from one class to another?

Behavior Improvement Program

(East Orange School District)

Objective

East Orange School District seeks to reduce the incidence of disruptive behavior of elementary school children by helping them to develop healthy self-concepts and competence in problem solving, decision making, and coping skills.

Description

The East Orange School District Behavior Improvement Program (BIP) is staffed by six trained guidance counselors who work in two elementary schools each. Their job is to work with disruptive and other children who require special support to improve their behavior in the classroom and other social situations. In general, the children referred to them need:

- the support and contact of an understanding adult
- help with self-concept and self-esteem
- assistance in improving relationships with peers
- help in solving social problems and in making responsible decisions

The counselors observe students in the classroom, meet with students individually, conduct group activities, and give instruction in specific problem solving and decision making skills. They also consult with parents, teachers, and other specialists and staff members concerning the students.

In addition, the counselors work with the district's family counselor to design and conduct parenting workshops at the elementary schools.

History/Background

The Behavior Improvement Program was initiated with the advent of OSR. OSR resources provided the means by which the district could hire well-trained guidance counselors to help disruptive elementary students to develop healthy self-concepts and competence in problem solving, decision making, and coping skills. The counselors have been working in the schools since October 1986.

Resources

The costs of the program are primarily in personnel (i.e., salaries and benefits for the six counselors), and have been shared by OSR and the district.

Implementation

Implementation of the program has benefitted from the quality of the counseling staff. However, the demand for services exceeded the staff and resources to operate the project.

Effectiveness

The provision of counseling support to elementary students through the Behavior Improvement Program has received strong support from both school personnel and the community. The principals have requested that the counseling position be supported year-round. Parents have circulated a petition indicating community support. In addition, three parochial schools in the area have asked for counseling help for students enrolled in their schools.

Family Consultation Program

(East Orange School District)

Objective

East Orange School District seeks to address through the services of a family counselor the family problems that are related to the behavior of disruptive middle school and junior high school students in the district.

Description

The East Orange School District Family Consultation Program provides free, short-term, school-problem focused consultation services to families of disruptive middle/junior high school students enrolled in the district. The program is staffed by a family counselor who is able to serve approximately 75 families in a given school year.

Students are referred to the family counselor only after teachers, counselors, and other school personnel have tried and failed to solve problems such as chronic absenteeism, dramatic drops in academic performance, and disruptive behavior. Some of the students have been suspended more than once within a school year or recommended for expulsion.

Families are contacted before the referral is made. Once a student is referred to the program, the family counselor conducts two interviews with the family in an attempt to identify the problems or situations which affect the student's behavior in school and the family.

The family counselor also works with counselors in the district's Behavior Improvement Program to design and conduct parenting workshops for families of elementary school students.

History/Background

The Family Consultation Program was fully implemented for the first time during the 1986-87 school year. Originally, the district hoped to provide long-term counseling to families. However, limited resources (i.e., one counselor) have restricted the program to short-term services, and families are referred to private counselors for continued help. However, the counselor hopes to expand the program to students in other grades.

Resources

The Family Consultation Program currently requires a full-time family counselor, whose salary has been covered by the district and OSR.

Implementation

Successful implementation of the Family Consultation Program has been influenced by the following factors.

- The quality of the family counselor, particularly her flexibility and willingness to work extended hours, including evenings and weekends.

- The physical location of the program. The family counselor works out of the district's Fellowship Center, a "neutral" site with evening activities and open seven days a week. The district's Tutorial Homework Hotline (see p. 21) is in the same building and its bilingual staff serves as a resource to the family counselor.

The implementation of the program has been impeded by:

- lack of sufficient staff and resources to meet expanding demands for services of the program

- the noise level associated with other activities at the Fellowship Center

- the fact that parents frequently miss their appointments.

Effectiveness

Those associated with the Family Consultation Program believe that is has been very effective. Teachers report improvement in the behavior of students whose families have been served by the family counselor. The counselor reports important changes have occurred in families served by the program.

In-School Adjustment Center

(Trenton School District)

Objective

Trenton School District seeks to provide an appropriate alternative setting over an extended period for disruptive elementary students who need a "time-out" from their regular classrooms and attention beyond normal classroom discipline.

Description

Trenton School District's In-School Adjustment Center (ISAC) is one of four alternative models designed by the district to deal with disruptive elementary students. Two elementary schools, Grant and Gregory, implemented the ISAC model during the 1986-87 school year.

In each school, the Center is located in a classroom somewhat removed from the main activity areas of the building. Each is staffed with a full-time certified teacher and paraprofessional aide, and handles from eight to ten students at a time. A guidance counselor works with students and staff in both Centers.

Students are referred to the Centers by both teachers and administrators and stay an average of one to three days. Once a student is referred, the parents are contacted and asked to meet with the Center's teacher. During the conference, the teacher tries to help the parents not only understand the problem, but also to think of ways to help their child at home.

The Center program includes:

- a structured learning environment. Each Center is equipped with moveable desks and study carrels, and copies of all textbooks and other curriculum materials used in the school. Students are expected to complete all the assignments from their regular classroom during their stay in the Center. The Center teacher and the aide assist the students and correct their written work.

- counseling support. The guidance counselor works with the students, both individually and in groups, to help them understand why they were assigned to the Center and what they can do to change their behavior in the future. Group discussion topics may include getting along with others, appropriate ways to express feelings, or how failure to meet basic needs for sleep and nutrition can affect emotional well-being. In individual sessions, the counselor may help a student map out a strategy to deal with anger or conflict. When time permits, the counselor meets with students after they leave the Center to see how they are doing on their individual plans.

- isolation from peers. During the period they are assigned to the Center, students are isolated from their friends and classmates. They are escorted from the playground into the classroom by the Center teacher at the first morning bell, and escorted out of the building at the end of the school day. They eat lunch in the Center, and are excluded from all extracurricular activities. In addition, they are not allowed to speak to each other without specific permission.

The staff of both Centers keep extensive records on the students while they are in the program. In addition, at Grant School, students complete a questionnaire when they enter the Center which asks them why they were sent and what they might do differently in the future. When they leave the Center, they sign a "contract" that describes what they plan to do to improve their behavior, with copies sent to parents and teachers. Students who are keeping to the terms of their contracts after ten days are given special privileges.

Both schools have established an Appropriate Behavior Committee of teachers and paraprofessionals who meet with Center staff each month to discuss how the Centers can function to improve the educational climate of the schools.

History/Background

In response to the OSR priorities, Trenton School District established an ad hoc committee of teachers, supervisors, and principals to design alternative approaches for reducing disruptive behavior in elementary students. The committee developed four models which could be adapted to meet an individual school's needs.

- Crisis Intervention, providing a short term (one hour to one day) "time-out" place to deal with emotional outbursts.
- In-School Adjustment Center, providing a time-out period of up to three days for disruptive students in grades K-7.
- Center for Behavioral Changes, providing one-half to one day stays for disruptive students in grades K-6.
- Self-Contained Behavioral Modification Class, an extended stay, self-contained classroom for elementary students who would benefit from a behavior modification program.

By October 1986, each model was being tested in two schools.

Resources

The primary cost of the ISAC program is for personnel. In Trenton, the total budget for each school is approximately $47,500.

Implementation

Personnel in both schools feel that the ISAC program meets the needs of their students for a consistent and structured environment with clear limits. The schools serve predominantly poor, minority children who live in a community where poor housing, substance abuse, and family stress are the rule. The program provides supervision for children who, if suspended from school, would probably be unsupervised during the period of their suspension.

Personnel in both schools feel that the implementation of ISAC has been enhanced by the dedication and skill of Center staff. Both teachers are reported to have strong interpersonal skills in working with parents and teaching colleagues.

Finally, it is suggested that the success of the program is inherent in its design. While the students may like teachers, they greatly dislike being isolated from their friends, the consequence of assignment to the Center. The power of this consequence may further contribute to the Center's success.

Effectiveness

The ISAC model has had remarkable success in reducing the number of suspensions. At Gregory Elementary in the year prior to the ISAC program, 65 students received out-of-school suspensions. In the first year of ISAC, only one student was suspended. Similar figures exist for Grant Elementary.

Both Centers were able to handle large numbers of students over the course of the year. The Gregory Center handled more than 500 referrals. Grant handled a total of 1,684; this significantly higher number is due in part to the fact that Grant teachers were encouraged to send students who needed only an hour or so of time out of the regular classroom.

Project Balloon

(East Orange School District)

Objective

Franklin Elementary School seeks to reduce the incidence of disruptive behavior in the school by providing special support for students with academic or behavioral problems.

Description

Project Balloon was developed by the staff of Franklin Elementary School to give a special "lift" to students with academic or behavior problems. A "balloon" is a person who provides a close, supportive relationship and helps the student with academic and personal needs. A balloon can be anyone in the school, a teacher, an aide, or another student. Balloons are identified and trained by the school's counselor and principal. The project also emphasizes parent involvement.

Students are identified for Project Balloon by their teachers who complete a behavioral checklist and a referral form and participate in an initial screening meeting. Students in Project Balloon are also eligible for a range of other school and district services, including academic help from co-op teachers, individual and group counseling in the Behavioral Improvement Program (see p. 81), and participation in the Tender Loving Care Club (TLC) which matches students and teachers in a "pal" program of activities.

History/Background

The staff of Franklin Elementary School started Project Balloon in 1985 with a grant from the Tyrell Foundation. At that time, the program focused on the early identification of children with academic or behavioral problems and the provision of special support and tutoring to these children.

In 1986-87, crowded conditions forced the school to use a co-op teaching arrangement and no "balloons" were used, although the staff still screened children for other school and district services. Anticipating cuts in the number of compensatory education teachers due to increases in achievement scores, the school will reintroduce "balloons" in 1987-88 as a way to provide extra help for students.

Resources

Project Balloon requires no additional funds beyond the school's operating budget. However, it does require time from the counselor and principal in maintaining the program and in identifying and training "balloons."

Implementation

The extra paperwork required to identify and qualify students for the services under other school and district programs is an on going burden in the implementation of the project.

However, the involvement and support of parents greatly facilitated the implementation of the project. Many parents donated time to help out in organizing and carrying out activities linked to the project.

Effectiveness

The staff of Franklin Elementary School believe that Project Balloon students are benefitting from the special relationship and tutoring provided by their balloons.

Saturday Neptune Alternative Program (SNAP)

(Neptune Township School District)

Objective

Neptune High School seeks to provide a positive alternative to out-of-school suspensions and to reduce the incidence of disruptive behavior of students in grades 9-12.

Description

Neptune High School established the Saturday Neptune Alternative Program (SNAP) to provide academic support and counseling to disruptive junior high and high school students. SNAP offers a three-hour program on Saturday mornings and is staffed by a guidance counselor and four teachers, three from the high school and one from the junior high. It is based in the high school library, but the entire school is available for use. SNAP serves students who would otherwise be suspended for behavior such as excessive tardiness, smoking, fighting, and insubordination. It is not an alternative for students suspended for violence or drug use.

SNAP is voluntary. Students facing suspension are given the option of attending a series of SNAP sessions instead. Students who choose SNAP must sign a contract agreeing to attend the assigned number of sessions (usually three), to arrive on time with school work to do, and to behave according to SNAP rules. Their parents must meet with school administrators and sign a contract agreeing to support their child's compliance.

SNAP staff are notified of the students who elect SNAP and the dates they will attend. The counselor obtains the students' class schedules, and the staff meet with the students' teachers to discuss class assignments, difficulties the students may be having, and whether extra credit work could help to boost the students' grades.

When students arrive at SNAP, they check in with the staff and are assigned a place to work. Students who fail to bring assignments or necessary materials are sent home. If a student fails to show up on the scheduled day, the school administrator is notified.

SNAP teachers provide individual and small-group tutoring in all basic subjects and assist the students in making use of library resources, including computers and accompanying software programs in keyboarding, reading, and math skills. The students may sign up to use a computer during the school week as well.

SNAP students also receive counseling. The guidance counselor meets with each student individually to discuss the problems that led to the student's placement. Subsequent counseling, whether one-on-one or in small groups, is based on individual needs. Sessions focus on life skills, vocational guidance, and student/family counseling. Information on planning for college is also made available.

Each SNAP student is invited to come back to the Saturday sessions at any time for special tutoring or counseling or to use the library resources.

Background/History

Prior to OSR, insufficient space and staff made in-school suspensions an impossibility at Neptune High School. When OSR funds became available, however, the school staff was encouraged to think creatively about how to provide positive alternatives to disruptive students and their parents and the Saturday session became a realistic possibility.

The first SNAP sessions were held during the 1985-86 school year, serving only students in grades 10-12. In the following year, the program was expanded to serve ninth graders at Neptune Junior High.

Resources

Costs of the SNAP program are entirely in personnel: five SNAP staff members, who are paid at a rate of $10/hour for six hours a week, four on Saturday morning and two for preparation during the school week; and custodial services while SNAP is in session. The high school principal, who serves as the SNAP administrator, estimates the program costs less than $10,000 a year.

Implementation

The success of SNAP depends upon the voluntary participation of students who would otherwise be suspended from school. Because suspension is more familiar, and because jobs and other activities may conflict with the Saturday schedule, school officials must insure that both parents and students are informed of the benefits of the SNAP alternative:

- the opportunity to keep up with classwork in a supportive environment. Students who are suspended miss classwork which they cannot make up
- avoidance of the 21 day rule. Students who miss 21 days of school in a given year lose academic credit for the year. SNAP provides the opportunity for students who would otherwise be suspended to remain in school
- the opportunity to receive individual attention in addressing the problems which led to the suspension.

Effectiveness

SNAP is designed to provide a positive alternative to out-of-school suspension and to reduce the incidence of disruptive behavior. Evidence of success in achieving these goals comes from the observations of both staff and students.

- SNAP teachers report a high degree of personal satisfaction in working with students in such a positive atmosphere. Removed from their peers and the daily pressures of school, SNAP students are both polite and appreciative, and the staff report hearing more "thank you's" on a Saturday morning than during several weeks of school. SNAP students greet them in the halls during the week, and display a more positive attitude in school.

- The SNAP counselor reports that she does more "real counseling" in the program than during the school week when her time is taken up with paperwork and other daily routines. She feels that the sessions focusing on strategies to overcome chronic tardiness and on alternatives to fighting and other disruptive behavior are having an impact on SNAP students.

- Initially skeptical, non-SNAP faculty report a positive impact on their own jobs. SNAP students in their classes return with a more positive attitude, behave better, and hand in assignments and extra credit work, completed during SNAP sessions, of improved quality.

- In written "exit statements" on completing the program, students report that although they do not like going to school on Saturday mornings, they appreciate the fact that the program helps them in completing assignments and in other important ways.

Suspension rates provide additional preliminary evidence that the SNAP program is reducing the incidence of disruptive behavior in SNAP students. Of the 42 students who attended SNAP sessions from October 1986 to March 1987, only 11 were eventually suspended. Administrators feel that the number of suspensions among these students would have been much higher without SNAP.

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YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

OSR OBJECTIVE: To reduce youth employment through vocational education.

Overview of Programs/Practices

This section describes high school Career Resource and Assessment Centers in the East Orange, Neptune Township, and Trenton School Districts that seek to achieve the OSR youth unemployment objective. While there are differences in both organization and approach among the programs, all three are based on a state-designed model and offer services in:

- Career Awareness. Information on career alternatives and opportunities for students to assess their career interests is provided, along with counseling.

- Job Development and Placement. Files of full- and part-time jobs available in the community are developed, and work is done to place students and graduates in appropriate positions.

In addition, the programs in Neptune and Trenton have developed junior high components which seek to increase career awareness and job opportunities for these younger students.

Career Resource and Assessment Centers

(Trenton School District)

Objective

Trenton School District seeks to increase by 20 percent the number of students placed in cooperative education jobs and by 10 percent the number of graduating seniors placed in full-time jobs through the services of career and job development centers.

Description

Trenton School District has established two centers to provide a full program of vocational and career services and resources to high school students.

The Trenton Central High School Career Resource Center is staffed by a full-time career counselor and a secretary. The Center is located in a large classroom furnished to accommodate individual and group work and to display materials. The Center serves both students and faculty and is designed to increase career awareness. Students and faculty usually come to the Center on an appointment basis, although informal visits are encouraged. The Center:

- offers pamphlets, career briefs, brochures, catalogues, and other resources with information about jobs and careers acquired from over 400 businesses, unions, agencies, and representatives of the military
- assists students and faculty in researching jobs and career options
- produces a monthly newsletter entitled Career Fare
- sponsors field trips to area businesses, industries, and colleges
- conducts periodic surveys of student concerns regarding jobs and careers and of job placement of graduates of the high school's vocational program
- hosts presentations by colleges, trade/technical/professional schools, and the military
- sponsors a career exploration club
- provides tours of the Center for high school students.

The Job Development and Assessment Center is staffed by a job developer and a job placement coordinator. The job developer works with individual students to match their interests and experiences with available jobs. The

Center primarily serves students in grades 10-12, although graduates are encouraged to use the job placement service and the file of current job opportunities. The Center includes:

- computer stations where students may work on a job assessment program which matches their abilities and interests with jobs that require similar traits, skills, and attitudes. Individualized computer printouts are used in student counseling sessions

- a video program for college bound students which contains discs describing hundreds of colleges, including their academic programs and campus life.

Job Center staff recognize the need for career awareness and training among younger students and have targeted the district junior high schools as a secondary audience for the program. The district's six junior high schools have participated in workshops designed to inform staff about the services available in the Center.

History/Background

In 1977, Trenton Central High School established a Career Resource Center based on a state model and funded with state money. When state funding ended a few years later, the district did not continue the program. In 1985, the Vocational Education Division of NJDE provided funds ($18,000) to re-establish the Center. With additional OSR funds amounting to $50,000, the Center became fully operational in 1986. OSR also supported the establishment of the Job Development and Assessment Center in 1985.

Resources

The primary costs associated with Trenton's program are for personnel.

The computers and related software were purchased with a grant from the Vocational Education Division of the Department of Education. Additional support for supplies and equipment such as air conditioners was supplied by OSR.

Implementation

The initial implementation of the Centers has been influenced by their physical locations. Because of space limitations, the two Centers are located in different wings of the high school. Staff in both Centers believe that closer proximity of the two programs would increase visibility and strengthen each program. In 1987-88, the school will be totally restructured, and the two programs may be able to move.

Staff in the Career Resource Center feel their services would be enhanced by an outside phone line and by strengthening the alignment of the high school curriculum with the goals and objectives of the Centers.

Effectiveness

In 1986-87, the Career Resource Center:

- assisted 166 students and 14 teachers in individual research into various job and career paths
- involved approximately 200 students in field trips to local businesses and colleges
- involved over 260 students in school site programs sponsored by various colleges and trade and professional schools

The Job Development and Assessment Center:

- placed 25 graduating seniors in full-time jobs in 1986; in 1987, the number was 105
- placed approximately 170 students in part-time jobs through the cooperative vocational education program
- involved 85 percent of the junior class in the assessment facilities.

Career Resource Center

(East Orange School District)

Objective

East Orange School District seeks to increase the number of graduating seniors in full-time jobs by at least 10 percent and the number of students placed in co-op jobs by 20 percent.

Description

As a result of the state's OSR initiative, East Orange School District has established Career Resource Centers at East Orange and Clifford J. Scott High Schools. The Centers are staffed by full-time job placement counselors who perform both career counseling and job development and placement. A job developer locates employment opportunities for both Centers.

The services of the Centers are available to all students, but are targeted to juniors and seniors. They include:

- information about careers and vocations. Both Centers have reference materials and vocational biographies as well as terminals that access the state's Computerized Career Information Delivery System (CIDS), which provides information on individual jobs and career lines

- career counseling Center staff provide career counseling to individual students and administer the Harrington O'Shea Interest Inventory to help students identify potential vocations.

- job development and co-op placement. The Centers maintain files of full- and part-time jobs available in the community and actively seek jobs for students looking for work, matching student competencies with job requirements

- instruction in skills necessary to employment. Center staff work with students individually on the skills they need to obtain a job. They help students fill out job applications, walk them through interview situations, and discuss appropriate work dress and behavior. They may also help a student determine transportation routes

During the first year of operation, job placement counselors went to all homerooms to publicize the Centers' services and conduct career awareness sessions. In addition, all juniors and seniors were cycled through the centers and took the Harrington O'Shea Interest Inventory.

History/Background

The East Orange School District initiated planning for Career Resource Centers at the two high schools in 1984-85, as part of the OSR. The design

of the Centers was based on the state's model for career counseling and job development and placement. Both Centers were operational by January 1986.

Resources

The cost for operating the program is approximately $100,000 annually. These costs are primarily for personnel, who include two full-time career counselors, a job developer, and two clerical aides. In addition, a district supervisor coordinates the program.

Implementation

The district encountered three primary difficulties in implementing the Career Resource Centers:

- difficulty in hiring staff on a "soft money" basis
- uneasiness among the staff regarding the "top-down" nature of the program (i.e., the design and implementation of the program were dictated by a state model rather than local initiative)
- a shortage of necessary equipment, including typewriters and computer terminals, and problems with getting the computer program on line during the summer months.

Effectiveness

The Career Resource Centers provide important new services and meet needs previously not addressed in the district's high schools. The district has been able to hire new staff who have established new relationships with local corporations. After a full year of operation:

- East Orange High School was cycling about 200 students per month through its Career Resource Center; Clifford J. Scott High School involved about 80 students per month in its services
- the number of students taking co-op education increased by 17.4 percent at both high schools and district wide.

In addition, many students have been able to obtain jobs as a result of the Centers' services and are reported to be very enthusiastic about the program.

Career Resource Services

(Neptune Township School District)

Objective

Neptune Township School District seeks to reduce youth unemployment through an array of vocational, career, and college counseling and employment services.

Description

Neptune Township School District provides vocational and career resource services through a three-part program which includes a high school Career Resource Center, a high school Job Developer Unit, and a junior high career exploration program.

Neptune High School's Career Resource Center is staffed by a job placement coordinator/career counselor and a secretary. The Center serves in-school youth only, who visit both individually and as part of a class experience. The Center provides:

- career and employment counseling
- college counseling
- job placement services

Terminals in the center access the state's computerized Career Information Delivery System (CIDS) and the Guidance Information System (GIDS), which provide information on careers and colleges. The Center also periodically disseminates career information through posters, bulletins, and school intercom announcements, and sponsors special events such as Career Day and a Women's Career Forum.

The high school's Job Developer Unit is staffed by a job developer and a secretary and is located in the high school library. The Unit serves seniors and out-of-school youth, including both graduates and dropouts, and provides:

- job counseling and placement services similar to those of the Career Center
- instruction in skills related to employability
- instruction in the use of CAI/CMI Microhost Computer Laboratory
- exit counseling for each graduating senior.

The job developer serves as liaison between the school district and the business and industrial communities and is a member of the Monmouth-Ocean Development Council. As such, he is able to learn what employers are

looking for in prospective employees in terms of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and personal traits. In addition, he has conducted several surveys which have helped him to serve the students, including an affirmative action survey in Monmouth County, an entry-level employment survey, and several student surveys. He has also written a publication, Manual for Graduates, designed to assist seniors in a job search.

The junior high program was developed through the collaborative efforts of the high school's career counselor and the job developer. The program includes:

- three seven-day courses, Self Awareness (seventh grade), Career Awareness (eighth grade), and Career Exploration (ninth grade)
- guest speakers
- "shadow agents" (i.e., local business people who allow a student to "shadow" them for a day to gain a close-up view of their careers)
- training programs in caddying (through a relationship with a local country club) and in babysitting along with a referral program
- a scholarship program.

The junior high program also includes a parents' night to inform parents of career awareness opportunities.

History/Background

Neptune School District has maintained a Career Resource Center at the high school since 1977, staffed by a job placement coordinator/career counselor and supported by federal, state and local funds. The OSR program allowed for the expansion of services, particularly in the area of job placement for high school students. OSR funding has also provided the impetus for the development of the junior high career counseling and awareness program.

Resources

New costs associated with the Neptune program are for the position of job developer and for secretarial support. In addition, in the first year of the program, OSR funds supported the hiring of two aides. However, the program is currently operating without the support of aides.

Other costs associated with the program are for equipment and materials. District funds were secured prior to OSR to acquire the computer equipment and software necessary to the program.

Implementation

Neptune's implementation of its career counseling and job placement program has been enhanced by:

- the unique relationships between the job developer and the business and industrial community, which provides invaluable information regarding job needs and requirements

- support of the faculty in encouraging students to use the facility and in using the program as part of their curriculum.

Effectiveness

In 1986-87, the Career Resource Center:

- assisted 350 eleventh grade students in determining course selection and career interests

- involved 146 seniors in employment seminars.

The Job Developer Unit:

- increased the Job Bank to include 353 business/industry contacts

- placed 89 graduating seniors in full-time jobs

- placed 11 students in full-time cooperative education placements, and 7 in part-time placements.

The district reports that by the end of the 1986-87 school year, full-time cooperative education placements had been increased by 20 percent and full-time employment of graduating seniors by 10 percent.

APPENDIX

Urban Initiative Interview
Format for
OSR Program Site Visits

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Interview Format for OSR Program Site Visits

1.0. Program Intent

1.1 What are the goals and objectives of the program/activities with which you have been associated?

1.2 How were these goals or objectives set?
(PROBE IF DIFFERENT FROM DISTRICT/OSR OBJECTIVES)

1.3 How did this program/activity come about (PROBE FOR IMPETUS, HISTORY)?

2.0 Current Status of Program/Activity

2.1 School or district-level focus? _____

2.2 Who is the primary audience? _____

Other, secondary, audience _____

2.3 Program start-up date? _____

2.4 Any documentation (written description) of your program? _____

2.5 How far are you in the implementation of this component/ activity? (PROBE - What has been done and when?)

3.0. Check of Proposed Plans with Current Activities

3.1 How do current practices compare to what is stated in this year's workscope. . . .

- for district level objectives?

- for each school-based plan?

3.2 Are there any activities that operated in previous years that are no longer in place?

- what are they?

- why are they no longer in place?

4.0 School/District/Community Context and Implementation Process

4.1 Has there been anything going on in the district that might have helped the process?

4.2 Has there been anything going on in the district that might have impeded the process?

4.3 Has there been anything going on in the school that might have helped the process?

4.4 Has there been anything going on in the school that might have impeded the process?

2.6 Was the program/activity in place, in any form, before OSR?

2.7 Describe how the program/activity works.

2.8 What special resources do you need to carry out this component?

dollars?

staff?

training?

resources/materials?

2.9 How would you describe the program's strengths?

2.10 How would you describe the program's weaknesses?

2.11 How do you know how well this program is doing? (PROBE FOR EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND DATA)

2.12 Can you provide us with any available evaluation data?

2.13 How has this program made a difference in your school/ district? (PROBE FOR EFFECTS)

2.14 Can you suggest someone else whom we should talk to about this program? _____

4.5 Has there been anything going on in the community that might have helped the process?

4.6 Has there been anything going on in the community that might have impeded the process?

4.7 What changes or adjustments have been made along the way? Describe why these were necessary.

4.8 What program changes or adjustments to the program/activity do you think you will be needing next year?

4.9 What do you think will happen to this program/activity when OSR funding ends?

5.0 State Support/Intervention

5.1 In what ways have the activities of the NJDE helped you achieve your goals?

5.2 In what ways have the activities of the NJDE made it more difficult to achieve your goals?

NOTE: In addition to the above questions, the interviewers may ask relevant follow-up questions in furthering their understanding about what is being communicated in the interview setting.